

THE  
FAITH  
OF THE  
FATHERS

—  
A Play  
In Three Acts

—  
HENRY BERMAN



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*THE FAITH  
OF THE FATHERS*



# THE FAITH OF THE FATHERS

## A PLAY IN THREE ACTS

BY  
**HENRY BERMAN**  
*Author of "Worshippers", "Gift Bearers", Etc.*

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## PERSONS OF THE PLAY

REV. DR. EPHRAIM JOSEFFY, Rabbi of Temple B'nai  
Israel of Pittsburgh  
SYDNEY ROSENTHAL, his brother-in-law  
ROSE JOSEFFY, his wife  
SIDONIE JOSEFFY, his daughter  
RABBI WILLIAM POLLITZ, Sidonie's fiancé  
CHARLES LAEMPFERT, President of Temple B'nai Israel  
MRS. CHARLES EDWARD PERKINS, a Christian Science  
practitioner  
CHARLES EDWARD PERKINS, her husband  
DR. STANLEY KANTOR  
JOSEPH WALLACH  
LEOPOLD BRENNER  
ALBERT SHOTTON } Trustees of Temple B'nai Israel  
FREDERICK SPEISER, of Sydney Rosenthal's law office  
MRS. W. REMINGTON BARDELL  
VERA DOSTON  
CHARLOTTE ANHALTZ  
An office boy in Sydney Rosenthal's law office

ACT I. Dr. Joseffy's Library. (One week elapses)  
ACT II. Sydney Rosenthal's private office. (Two  
weeks elapse)  
ACT III. Same as Act I.

1928812



## ACT I

The library in the home of the Reverend Doctor Ephraim Joseffy, spiritual head of those who worship in Temple B'nai Israel, Pittsburgh. The house is a gift to their rabbi from the synagogue, and the wealth of the congregation can be gauged by the money which has been lavished upon this room.

At its inception, a decorator had treated it as a color unit, hampered by such impediments as the architect structurally put into his way; and the color idea has, on the whole, been maintained through the various changes the room has since undergone. The treatment is brown against green: the floor is stained brown, the walls with their sweep of built-in bookshelves are of oak, the William and Mary and the late Jacobean furniture is of oak, the fireplace against the rear wall is in a rough brown brick, the ceiling is beamed in oak; the required green is in the upholstering, in the pongee silk casement curtains, in the handsomely brocaded velour cushions, and in the velour portieres.

So much for the color impression. The room itself is long, with a door to the right which opens into the living room, a door in the upper right hand corner to which two steps rise which lead to the hall, and casement windows at the left which look out on a garden.

The dominating sense of furnishings is in the several thousand books which are marshalled from floor to ceiling on all sides. The other outstanding features are a spacious library table at the right, placed near the sitting room door which opens almost against it; a long, finely carved bench before the fireplace; and a deep, comfortable settle before the windows on the left. Several arm chairs and wing chairs are placed so as to properly fill out the room, while a gateleg table on the left of the fireplace holds handsome tea utensils.

The library table carries two lamps in Japanese vases of gold and green, a curiously fashioned clock of bronze and crystal, ornate writing materials, a telephone instrument, a group of new books between bronze bookends, an Old Testament luxuriously bound, and a marble replica of Rodin's "Hand of God." The only other conspicuous religious art object in the room is an oak-framed copy, in color, of Rembrandt's "Isaac Blessing the Children of Joseph," hung over the fireplace between gilt Italian candlesticks.

On the floor are a number of antique Persian rugs, whose play of color reaches up in friendly intimacy to the overshadowing rows of books even though the discord of the floor coverings in the color scale of the room would trouble the soul of a professional decorator.

There is a great deal of noise and activity in the adjoining sitting room. The library itself has but a single occupant, a young woman in hat and coat who is sitting at the foot of the alcove of books between the fireplace and the rear door, and who is engrossed in the pictures of a very large volume. She is a serious-minded little

person, un-Semitic in physiognomy, and on close view somewhat stiff and hard with egotism, and precisely the sort who would drift away from the chatter which dins its way in from the other room. Vera Doston (abbreviated from the "Dostonewsky" which her father brought from Russia) is one of the number of Russian-American young women writing fiction in the guise of autobiography.

From the sitting room comes a highly sentimentalized rendition on the piano of Kreisler's "Liebesfreud." The door to the right is thrown open, and a young woman bustles in, the plumes on a rather large hat in commotion, and her corsetted plumpness greatly agitated. Her dark skin, dark eyes and prominent nose are more racially correct than Vera's blondness and abbreviated features, and her exuberance is in marked contrast to Vera's schooled restraint. Charlotte Anhaltz has brought news which makes her impatient of the sprawling girl's book.

CHARLOTTE. Do put that away, and come in, Vera! (*Then her curiosity gets the better of her excitement*). What have you there? (*Bending over*) What's that? (*With a giggle*) They certainly don't look like religious pictures!

VERA (*loftily*) They are as religious as pictures can be. Hogarth could very well be the subject for a sermon. You've got an awful provincial mind, Charlotte, even though you do live in Pittsburgh.

CHARLOTTE (*as Vera turns to another picture*) You don't think Dr. Joseffy would want to make a sermon out of that? (*Anxiously*) He might come in, you know!

VERA. If you feel it isn't proper, you don't have to look at it, you know.

CHARLOTTE (*really uncomfortable*) Dr. Joseffy is so careful about what he wants us to read—

VERA (*impatiently*) *Honi soit qui mal y pense!*

CHARLOTTE. You certainly can be catty. (*After a pause, as Vera pays no attention to her*) The girls are planning a dance for Sidonie. Not that we would expect her to dance. (*Vera raises her head*). But it's for the spirit of the thing. Why, it would be like a festival! After her being eight years an invalid, we've simply got to think up something unusual! It takes my breath away! There she is, getting about, like any one of us!

VERA. I'm glad things like that happen to strengthen our faith in God. (*Conscious that this shocks Charlotte*) I haven't said anything so terrible. The roof won't fall on you. (*Querulously*) But why isn't Sidonie down? Or why doesn't she send word with her mother? (*With contracted brows*) It's been very foolish of us to come in a crowd.

CHARLOTTE. Mrs. Joseffy could have told us not to come when we telephoned, if that was so. You'll upset the girls if you make them feel they aren't welcome. Sidonie is getting about, and you know she's been in town and seen some of the girls. So she must be strong enough to see us.

VERA (*closing the book and slipping it back into its place*) We've been here twenty minutes since her mother went up to tell her we were here. The best thing

is for us to be sensible, and for most of us to go away, and to stop all that noise.

CHARLOTTE (*alarmed to the verge of tears*) Sidonie couldn't misunderstand that we were happy about her and were showing it!

(*The piano music in the next room changes to a gavotte by the Russian composer Glazounow*).

VERA (*caught by the cadence and the rhythm*) Now, that's what I call honest music! Kreisler's wasn't! (*Coming back to the matter in hand after a brief enjoyment of the gavotte*) We can't judge Sidonie's strength by the things she is doing. A dance may be too exciting for her. Rushing from one wild plan to another won't lead anywhere, for we haven't any real idea what her real condition is. She didn't say very much to the girls who saw her.

CHARLOTTE (*with a toss of the head*) I don't care. I'm so happy about her that "ifs" and "buts" don't bother me! I wish you'd be more cheerful, Vera. Looking at those pictures of Hogarth would make anybody blue.

VERA. Looking at a mirror makes a lot of people blue. I'm the last person in the world to be afraid of facts.

(*They resume their waiting, although Vera makes no effort to get out another book*).

CHARLOTTE. You've certainly got me worrying!

VERA. You'll have to try not to be. (*Relenting*) If we girls are going to get together to make some sort of a gift to Sidonie, we might get a good portrait painter

to give us a head of her. She'd make a splendid subject.

CHARLOTTE (*in raptures*) You dear! Why, that's a real inspiration! A portrait that they could hang right there above the fireplace, Vera! Was it Hogarth made you think of it? You must come out at once to tell the girls!

VERA. She may not want to sit for her portrait, my dear.

(*Before Charlotte can adjust herself to her companion's mental somersault, the opening of the rear door turns the attention of both to the person whom it admits. Mrs. Ephraim Joseffy enters quickly. She shuts the door behind her. She is a tiny, black-haired woman, with a bird-like head, and is sudden in her movements. The suggestion of a bird is heightened by the high note in her voice, to which her little hands play a rapid accompaniment.*).

MRS. JOSEFFY. Vera! Charlotte! Just a moment! (*She goes to the door to the right which is slightly ajar, and closes it. Her hand is on the knob when she turns to the girls again, as if she wishes to keep out anyone who might want to come in*). It's all right. There's nothing to worry about. It's fortunate that you two are here, for you can tell the others. Sidonie isn't coming down. She says she will see you all just as soon as she can. I know you will understand.

CHARLOTTE. Surely!

(*But it is evident that the two girls do not understand. They wait for further enlightenment. Mrs.*

*Joseffy hesitates. The momentary silence affords a background for the Glazounow music drifting in from the next room).*

VERA (*with a shade of impatience*) Sidonie is continuing to feel better, isn't she?

MRS. JOSEFFY. Yes, indeed! It isn't that, dear. Certain things—you see—it's the matter of getting accustomed— (*She breaks off*).

CHARLOTTE. Is there anything we can get her? Some books?—Or new music records?

MRS. JOSEFFY. It's so thoughtful of you! (*She nervously kisses Charlotte*). I'm going up stairs again. You will know what to tell the girls, won't you? (*She is looking at Charlotte, not at Vera*). Sidonie is better, thank God! Never fear! But please don't let the girls hurry away.

(*She hesitates as if this vagueness were unsatisfactory even to herself, and finishes by fluttering out of the room. The two visitors look non-plussed*).

VERA. She seemed ready to tell us why Sidonie couldn't see us.

CHARLOTTE. You were right about not coming in a crowd, Vera. I wish I hadn't been here!

VERA (*immediately reversing herself without a qualm*) We came with the best intentions in the world. So please don't be a cry-baby! I'm very fond of Mrs. Joseffy; but how can we ask the girls to go without starting all kinds of talk?

(*An electric bell whirs briefly in another part of the house. The laughter and chatter in the next*

*room become subdued. Charlotte is ready to go in to the others, despite the indefiniteness of her message, when she is brought up sharply with a turn by her companion).*

VERA. You don't mean you're going to show your face in there without really knowing what you are going to say! Can you imagine what it would mean to create any wrong impression?

CHARLOTTE (*in despair*) What shall we say?

VERA. Leave it to me.

*(The figure of a portly man frames the doorway to the right. With the opening of the door comes the din from the other room, to the accompaniment of the music.*

*(The man who enters is Charles Laempfert, the leading Jewish banker of Pittsburgh. His massiveness bulks larger as he moves forward, and his pronouncedly Semitic head makes an impressive show of energy and tenacity with its long, smooth-shaven face, ruddy lips, strong nose and beetling brows. His poise barely escapes arrogance. He is not yet fifty, but he looks older).*

LAEMPFERT. Ah, so some of the mob has broken in here (*Patronizingly*) Well, Miss Doston, still writing poetry?

VERA (*coldly*) I didn't know you had time to find out whether anybody was writing poetry.

CHARLOTTE (*flirting*) How's business, Mr. Laempfert?

LAEMPFERT. I was going to ask you that. (*He seats himself behind the library table*). Are you two the ad-

vance guard? I understand that the girls are expecting Sidonie down.

VERA (*as Charlotte looks over towards her for help*) We were about to tell them that she isn't coming down.

LAEMPFERT (*less phlegmatic*) Why, what's the matter?

VERA. Nothing, as far as I know. I suppose there were too many of us.

LAEMPFERT (*the dig about his lack of interest in poetry still rankling*) Too many to the very last one.

VERA. We were trying to show our happiness in Sidonie's getting stronger. Don't tell me that everything men do is awfully reasonable!

LAEMPFERT (*looking away from her*) I can't help the spirit in which you take my remark.

CHARLOTTE (*who has opened the door to the right, and as quickly closed it*) Dr. Joseffy is there!

VERA. We should have been in there ahead of him! (*She leads the way out hurriedly*).

LAEMPFERT (*when they are out of earshot*) Damned little Russian! (*He leans over towards the telephone set and lifts the receiver*). Grant one-one-four . . . Hello! Hello! . . . Mr. Edelstein, please! This is Mr. Laempfert talking. . . . Hello, Edelstein. . . . Very well, thank you! . . . I've decided to share in the expense of sending your man to Oklahoma. But as a precaution, I would send two men who know oil, say a week apart, and check their reports against each other. . . . Yes. . . . Understand, Edelstein, I don't want anyone to know about this—not until we actually find

some oil. My self-respect has kept me out of this sort of thing so far. (*Laughs condescendingly*) . . . . All right. Good bye.

(*He sits back with a satisfied air, and soon his immediate surroundings begin to fade away as he spins about himself the intricate web of business speculation.*

(*An entirely antithetical type presently comes into the room in the person of the Reverend Doctor Ephraim Joseffy. It is not difficult to surmise that he is an individual for whom the everyday world is one of considerable illusion, to be borne with patiently for the sake of others, and that he prefers the abstract because it disturbs him least.*

(*In appearance he is tall, bony, with a narrow, bearded head, and sensitive features that are more readily responsive to suffering than to happiness. At this particular moment his eyes are those of one who is badly concealing a hurt. He is wearing an academic cap and gown and a doctor of divinity ribbon across his breast.*

JOSEFFY (*stopping to shake hands with Laempfert; speaking nervously*) I'm glad you've come, Charles.

(*He divests himself of the cap and gown, and goes to the other end of the room to throw them on the settle. Without them he looks very frail and somewhat stooped. His garb is similar to that of a Christian clergyman.*)

LAEMPFERT. How's the enrollment at the University this fall?

JOSEFFY (*hearing past his preoccupation as he stands*

*abstracted in the middle of the room)* Very good, very good.

LAEMPFERT. Some time or other I'll give them some money for a new building and get a doctor's degree, and it will be an excuse for attending their Exercises. How were this morning's?

JOSEFFY (*with an effort becoming socially responsive*) Opening Exercises are dull as a rule, but I thought things were better this year. The Governor was dreadfully commonplace.

LAEMPFERT. In that case he surprised no one. What particular antidote did you supply?

JOSEFFY (*walking to the settle and looking out of the window*) The students may have put me in the Governor's class. The title I chose—"The Iron Highway"—couldn't have sounded promising. (*Turning*) I pictured our civilization as wrought in iron, which must not be left to rust. I appealed to them to keep to this highway at this precarious time in the world's history. (*More energetically*) I flayed novelty as a distorted mirror in which neither the intellectual nor the moral life sees itself aright. It was their duty to resist the hot-house atmosphere of the times. (*With a shrug of the shoulders*) Of course, my figures of speech did not jostle each other like that.

LAEMPFERT (*shaking his head*) We are wasting our time about the younger generation, Ephraim. I say it despite the wonderful influence you have been.

(*He takes a cigarette from a prettily chased gold case, and lights it*).

JOSEFFY (*bitterness showing through the emphasis*)

Influence? My influence? But we will come to that in a moment. As far as those young people were concerned, I brought them that message because it needed expression. I had grown too uncomfortable with the thought of it left unsaid. At times during the address I had a sense of speaking in anger. I could not help it. There were things within which hurt me. (*Controlling himself*) That's why I sent for you, Charles.

(*He abruptly turns to see if the doors are shut*).

LAEMPFERT (*who has been watching him wondering-ly*) What is it?

JOSEFFY. On the way home, Charles, I tried to rehearse how I was to tell you. (*With a bitter laugh*) They say that lightning never strikes twice in the same place. We're blind, Charles! We're blind to what is going on around us! We try to walk right through the obvious! We ignore vital matter-of-fact conditions, even as we ignore the inevitable coming of death!

LAEMPFERT (*calmly*) I suppose we're too busy.

JOSEFFY. No! It's because we never really come to grips with life.

LAEMPFERT. Will it help if we try to prevent whatever lightning you speak of from striking a third time?

JOSEFFY (*tense*) Charles, you've come here on an errand of mercy, for I am in desperate trouble. In the past there was another man to whom I could have turned. Today I have stumbled on the realization that I hate that man—I, who should harbor no hates!

LAEMPFERT. It's no discredit to you that you have finally arrived at that feeling. (*Pursing his lips*) Rosenthal was a sort of proof to me that brothers-in-law are

rarely satisfactory. They seem to sum up all the undesirable qualities of the family one marries into. I've got my share, although I don't pretend it's a match for yours.

JOSEFFY. I can see now how lenient all of you have been to Sydney Rosenthal because he is my brother-in-law. But I can say to you now that he is monstrous, that he is a danger to the community! You once insisted that a renegade couldn't be trusted. It is true! They are centres of corruption every one of them!

LAEMPFERT You haven't told me yet what has happened, Ephraim. If it is necessary we will manage to make it uncomfortable for Rosenthal in Pittsburgh. We should have done it long ago.

JOSEFFY (*alarmed*) No! No! That was never the way! (*In the depths of despair*) Anyway, it's too late to adopt such an attitude.

LAEMPFERT (*coming forward*) You look fagged out. You've been overworking.

JOSEFFY (*evidently not hearing him*) You understand, I may be merely guessing when I say that Sydney Rosenthal is responsible for this. I should be fairer: he may have done nothing deliberately—

LAEMPFERT (*unable to restrain his curiosity any longer*) What is it you are talking about?

JOSEFFY (*not realizing in the turmoil of his thoughts that he has not yet given his facts*) What?

LAEMPFERT (*friendly, yet firm*) Just a moment, Ephraim. Whatever it is, you're not going to go to pieces the way you did when you learned of Rosenthal's apostacy. An experience like that should have been an

education to you. (*Even as he speaks, he is trying to conjecture what has occurred*).

JOSEFFY. Great heavens, Charles, wouldn't my own daughter's conversion be ten thousand times worse than than that of Sydney Rosenthal's?

LAEMPFERT (*digesting the news in a flash*) So that's what made her well!

JOSEFFY. No! Eddyism never made Sidonie well!

LAEMPFERT (*trying to get command of the situation*) No; but let's be calm about this. You can be. (*Seizing at a straw*) You were able to go to the University this morning. It shows the value of self-possession.

JOSEFFY. It doesn't help. Don't you think I have been trying to view this calmly? The fact that this is a somewhat different catastrophe than Sydney's defection only makes it the more horrible!

LAEMPFERT. Come! We aren't as helpless as all that!

JOSEFFY (*explosively*) To think there were times when I thought his conduct was our opportunity for tolerance! That's sentimentality, not ethics!

LAEMPFERT. The sentimental part of us is only on the surface.

JOSEFFY. You haven't caught the significance of this yet. Why, look what happened just now! (*Pointing to the other room*) Those eager, expectant girls came to greet her, fairly wild about her recovery. And—she can't face them!

LAEMPFERT. After all, that's not so bad. There's hope in that.

JOSEFFY (*his face contorted with suffering*) The daughter of Ephraim Joseffy should never have been

scorched in that flame! She should have gone through the accursed furnace of any Christian appeal, and come out the Jewess she went in!

LAEMPFERT. Not if she really believes she has been cured by going through that particular furnace. And she has the argument that she is better.

JOSEFFY. I am not denying the possible efficacy of hypnotism or mental suggestion. But this is a religion that waves the cross. The awfulness of it is, Charles, that my gratitude for her improvement in health, and my fear that she may relapse if we are not careful, create such an anomalous condition! From being wild with joy, I have become wild with fear. (*He collapses into a nearby seat*).

(*There is a pause*).

LAEMPFERT (*evenly*) How did you find out?

JOSEFFY (*becoming conscious of Laempfert's marked composure*) I should have gone to you the very first day. But you know how it is. Where our real feelings are concerned, we older men become hermits. It is a specious form of reserve, more befitting a boy in his adolescence.

LAEMPFERT. A day more or less, when you have been kept in ignorance so long— (*He finishes with a little gesture*).

JOSEFFY. Each day has been an eternity. I might not have known up to this present hour but for an accident. I chanced on one of the bundles of books she brought back from Michigan, and thought I would help her by unpacking them. Among them were some Christian Science pamphlets. (*Painfully*) There was more than that, however.

LAEMPFERT (*interposing*) Just a moment. You don't think she left them there for you to find, so as to clear the way for explanations?

JOSEFFY (*taken aback*) I never thought of that! (*But the idea proves too repugnant*) But it isn't like Sidonie! It's miles removed from her way of dealing with questions in which we have a common interest! (*Even as he says this he realizes how ludicrous it sounds in the light of what has occurred*).

LAEMPFERT. You've got to allow for her conscience. Concealing the facts has driven her to extremes. (*Grumbling at a private grievance*) At best, our children really tell us nothing. They live pretty well as they please, and only use our affection to get what they want.

JOSEFFY (*trying to save the situation from utter moral collapse*) Sidonie was undoubtedly waiting for a favorable moment to come to me, Charles. It was only a matter of time. (*Hurriedly*) Don't misunderstand me: she has a perfect right to read Christain Science literature if she chooses. It is her silence that wounds me. It shows the spirit in which the reading has been done. And the manner in which she has taken her recovery tells the rest.

LAEMPFERT. You're sure beyond a doubt?

JOSEFFY (*miserably*) Beyond a doubt.

LAEMPFERT. How does Rosenthal figure in it?

JOSEFFY. I can't lay my finger on that. He may have done nothing directly. But undoubtedly he was waiting for Sidonie to give some sign. She, on her part, may have been led by curiosity to see what he found in Eddyism. Oh, he's been careful!—undoubtedly even when

she visited him. (*Apologetically*) I had no right to keep her from seeing him, Charles.

LAEMPFERT. Better so. If you had shown the slightest ill-feeling about her visiting him, she would have resented it—and gone anyway.

JOSEFFY (*wailing, even as faithful Jews wail before the crumbled walls of the Temple at Jerusalem*) And now we have this! You should have seen her marginal notes on those pamphlets!—the explanations!—the arguments! She was reasoning as no Jew should.

LAEMPFERT (*frowning*) So!

JOSEFFY (*as if to have the recital over with after the long repression*) I am not the sort of person who lends himself easily to suspicion. When I saw those pamphlets my first thought was that in some idle hour Sidonie, having somehow gotten hold of this literature, had turned her mind to answering a lot of metaphysical riddles, and answering them on Christain Science lines to see how they would work out. Then I remembered that at Frankfort she had gotten a postoffice box. What need had she for it at a summer place like that?—unless it was to receive correspondence that might otherwise come under my eye the few times when I visited there this summer. But such correspondence would be necessary if she was receiving Christian Science “healing,” as they call it. Well, in that case, money was needed.

LAEMPFERT. Unless her uncle footed the bills.

JOSEFFY. Sidonie would not be likely to let him do that—don’t you see?—if for no other reason than that no undue blame should fall on him when she finally told us. Of course, that did not stop me from the most distressing conjectures.

LAEMPFERT (*with a snap of the jaws*) Pretty bad! But I don't see how you could know that she got the "healing." She could pay for them in money-orders.

JOSEFFY. She undoubtedly did so at Frankfort. But by the time she got home, the influence of Eddyism was bound to make her indifferent to concealment. Precautions to keep from hurting us would not appear so necessary. You see?

LAEMPFERT (*guessing correctly*) Of course Sigmund let you see her last checks.

JOSEFFY. You have as honest a cashier, Charles, as any bank in this country. I don't think he violated any confidence—

LAEMPFERT (*shortly*) You did exactly the right thing!

JOSEFFY. I did not want to go directly to you, for I was not sure, and I didn't want to worry you. There have been moments since when I have felt it was like petty spying. But the very reason why Sigmund did not hesitate to show me the checks—because I was the spiritual head of the congregation to which he belonged—was my moral right to see them! This affected more than Sidonie, more than your cashier, more than myself. It concerned all Israel!

LAEMPFERT. You were entirely justified.

JOSEFFY (*with disgust*) I found a check—to Mrs. Perkins.

LAEMPFERT. Mrs. Perkins? Oh, yes!—the healer whom Rosenthal defended.

(*Joseffy does not hear him. He is staring straight ahead, as if the check in question were in front of him.*)

JOSEFFY (*slowly*) When I saw it, my cowardice was unlike anything I had ever experienced. I was to all intents and purposes an insane man for several hours.

LAEMPFERT. You should have come to me. Not because I am the President of your synagogue—

JOSEFFY. Ah, Charles, I was in deadly fear of having to talk to anyone! I took a taxicab, and drove to the outskirts of the city, where I wandered about. I tried to pray. The words strung along meaninglessly. (*He wipes the perspiration from his forehead*). Yet you see: I have been attending to routine things since. But my thoughts all this time have been simply other forms of madness. (*Brokenly*) I have even thought of demanding an explanation from her!

LAEMPFERT. If you do it carefully enough, it ought not to be so terrifying to ask for some explanation. I hardly see how it can be avoided. As a matter of fact, Sidonie would be better off for a talk.

JOSEFFY. I have wondered whether the child has grasped the enormity of what she has done. It is true, she may have seized on this desperate remedy as a last resort. But if she has, what influence have I had over her? Nothing! And failing to keep her out of this fantastic Christianity, of what use can I have been to other people?

LAEMPFERT (*showing impatience*) We mustn't go off in a wrong direction. You owe more consideration than that to yourself. In the first place you've got to continue showing how glad you are that she is better.

JOSEFFY (*since there is nothing stridently happy in Laempfert's tone*) What are you thinking of?

LAEMPFERT. That you must be ready to explain to

Sidonie how she got well before she gets a chance to do so to the entire Jewish community.

JOSEFFY (*on the defensive*) Aren't you taking an altogether hopeless view of it, Charles? Sidonie will speak to me before she speaks to anyone else.

LAEMPFERT. After Rosenthal, dare we take any chances? Would you have believed three years ago that your brother-in-law would turn Christian, and instead of being one of the mainstays of the synagogue, become a pillar in a Christian Science Church? Better to concede the worst, and be prepared!

JOSEFFY (*heroically trying to assume Laempfert's impersonal viewpoint*) No, we can't afford to take chances.

LAEMPFERT. We dare not, Ephraim! The people here have a lot of respect for Sidonie's intelligence, and for what you have made of her mentally. If she follows her uncle, my daughter, and the next Jew's daughter, and the next will begin to think things they never thought before.

JOSEFFY. Yes. If we are losers, we are utterly begared. Understand, Charles, (*resolutely*) if I really believed that this quackery cured her, I might be willing to concede that there were grounds for examining it in an impartial manner!

LAEMPFERT (*quickly*) I am second to none in tolerance. But this is only another brand of Christianity, and I simply won't take time to examine it! They have baited a new kind of trap for Jews; they call it Christian Science. Are we going to imperil our position by playing fair with them? You know how many of our best citizens—practical people, too—go to get their fortunes told. I tell you, there are very few well-balanced men

and women. We've got to put our foot down on the whole thing—the way I stamped the life out of a snake in the woods this summer. It had to be done like a flash. (*For a brief moment he silently relives the incident; then he is conscious of the anxiety of the man before him.*) Naturally, we will use the utmost discretion with Sidonie. We will have to humour her to get the desired result.

JOSEFFY. Humour Sidonie?

LAEMPFERT (*not to be caught at a disadvantage*) We will appear to be making certain concessions to her honorableness, that's all. The end justifies the means. We are intelligent enough to see that our means are all right.

JOSEFFY. Charles, if we are to do anything at all, it would be best to go straight to the mark. Otherwise we face possible humiliation. She will see through it, and she will have no respect for us.

LAEMPFERT. Are you sure, after all, that you really know Sidonie? I tell you, our children don't live in the same world that we do! Why, from the way you have been talking, you're not even certain that she has told the man she's going to marry!

JOSEFFY. If she never told me, she never told William.

LAEMPFERT. On the contrary, you must be prepared for anything; even for the possibility that Rabbi Pollitz does know, and in order to show her how liberal he is, has let her experiment with Christian Science.

JOSEFFY (*with a gesture of repugnance*) What an idea! It's not like you! Come, Charles, be fair to William. He may not be of big calibre, but he's a Jew at all times.

LAEMPFERT. But look at it dispassionately! Being a minister does not make him any the less human. Sidonie's continued illness has been hard on him. I must speak plainly to you, Ephraim! A man does not want to see the woman he cares for in a constant state of dejection, and an invalid. (*As Joseffy turns away*) Of course, you've thought of all that. But that hasn't made it easier for William Pollitz. I don't say that he told her to go ahead and try Christian Science. He simply may have winked at the whole thing.

JOSEFFY. It would be too dishonest! No, you'll find I'm right. He is as ignorant of this as I was until I chanced on those pamphlets. We're fighting for him, too, Charles. His position is not going to be an enviable one, with the sort of congregation he has.

LAEMPFERT. Let's put Rabbi Pollitz aside for the time being. This primarily concerns you and Sidonie. I believe that you should so manage affairs as to give her a chance to drop quietly out of Christian Science. I would not try to be in a hurry about placing the blame. You have the advantage because you have had plenty of time to know what you are going to do and say. If you can manage it, do not regard this matter as affecting your own daughter. Otherwise you will be beaten before you start. (*Heavily*) I tell you, we have to consider self-interest. Those children of ours just walk all over our hopes. As I've watched Geraldine grow up, it doesn't seem possible that she is my own flesh and blood. Think of it!—the daughter of a banker, with position and social responsibilities, and yet unable to put one useful idea to work, constantly itching for excitement, and running

after trifles! And you know how foolish I was about them when my children were little.

JOSEFFY (*beginning to pace the room*) We dare not cease loving them, Charles. We will be old people in a few years, and they're the repository of all our ambitions and dreams.

LAEMPFERT (*with a snort of derision*) To them we are old people already! But that's no reason why they should catch us at a disadvantage and laugh away our influence. We have more brains than they, and we will keep on ruling the world! (*More quietly*) As for Sidonie, you must begin to prepare her mother. I don't suppose you've told her on account of her heart. (*As Joseffy shakes his head*) Well, her mother's heart trouble didn't keep Sidonie from going ahead. Tell Rose at once. (*He forbears to read the other man a lecture on that score*).

JOSEFFY. With my own thoughts in confusion, it would have been too inconsiderate.

LAEMPFERT. After telling Rose, you've got to get hold of Rabbi Pollitz. If he doesn't know and you postpone telling him, he will feel that you don't trust him. He will never forgive you.

JOSEFFY (*beaten down by the accumulation of difficulties*) Sidonie should be the one to speak to him.

LAEMPFERT. What do you know of her new idea of duty?

JOSEFFY. No matter what comfort she derives from this religion, in her heart she can't be very happy with this situation as it exists.

LAEMPFERT. Exactly. You have got to relieve her

anxiety. In your place I would not postpone talking to her.

JOSEFFY (*making up his mind suddenly and stopping in front of Laempfert*) Very well! I'll talk to her today—if possible while you're here. She has a great deal of respect for you, and would not judge it to be odd that you should have been called into the family council. Is that all right?

LAEMPFERT. Just as you wish. I want to see it through. (*Abruptly*) Are you sure she doesn't suspect that you know?

JOSEFFY. She has been too preoccupied, and we have not been thrown together very much since her return. She has changed, Charles. I can't explain what it is. You will see it. Yet physically she seems so—(*he seeks the right word*)—so sure-footed.

LAEMPFERT (*sweeping it all aside as merely beclouding the issue*) You have your intellect and your will power. She cannot ignore you. The approaching Holy Days will help you, too. The more I think of it, the less likely it seems that she can go very far in Christian Science.

JOSEFFY. Yet I can't approach her smilingly to disarm her. (*Reaching out for a greater show of sympathy*) Do you realize from what sort of a basis I have to make my start? This wretched child has been immersed for perhaps three months in a new religion of which she demanded a miracle. She has gone through all that, and comes home—without giving a sign of what she has been about. The Holy Days were discussed in her presence, and she said nothing. Mind you, here was I talking of our God and our Holy Days; and there she

was, thinking of another God, the deity Mary Baker Eddy assembled out of the Old and New Testaments by distorting the plain facts of both books! We were two people maintaining a position essentially dishonest, and particularly dangerous because Sidonie and I are religious to the core! I had to keep reminding myself that I was more than her father: that I was a leader in Israel; else I was ready to let matters drift. It is like a curse, Charles.

*(There are two quick, soft taps on the door leading from the hall. Joseffy turns impatiently; then goes to open the door. Mrs. Joseffy stands looking down at them hesitatingly, and with evident uneasiness).*

JOSEFFY (*as she waits*) Charles is the only one here, Rose. You can come in.

*(She does so, with her characteristically staccato gait). ..*

MRS. JOSEFFY. How do you do, Charles?

LAEMPFERT (*cordially*) Hello! Getting settled?

MRS. JOSEFFY. I have to answer the door myself. Neither of my maids came back, and the cook, I am sure, doesn't like Jews, and is glad that she doesn't have to go to the door to open it, except when I am upstairs. (*To her husband*) Did they treat you all right at the Exercises?

JOSEFFY (*absently*) Yes.

MRS. JOSEFFY (*smilingly, to Laempfert*) I am waiting for the afternoon papers to see what he said.

LAEMPFERT. The reporters will only pick out the things the public is likely to misinterpret.

JOSEFFY (*earnestly*) Why didn't you come with me to the Exercises, Rose? I had a strange feeling about going up alone. Although it must be stranger to you to hear me say so.

MRS. JOSEFFY (*without looking at him*) There was so much to do. I will go next time. (*It is inadequate, and she laughs a little*). William called up before you came. He said that he had something to tell you.

JOSEFFY (*in a strained voice*) So? Did he give any indication of what it was?

MRS. JOSEFFY. He seemed very happy about it. You will stay for lunch, Charles?

LAEMPFERT (*who has been eyeing her searchingly*) No, thanks, Rose. I must get back. (*For Joseffy's benefit*) I must stay long enough, though, to learn what is making Rabbi Pollitz happy, if he is coming right up.

MRS. JOSEFFY. He ought to be here now. (*Scolding*) You never will call him "William"!

LAEMPFERT (*puckering up his brow with an air of amusement*) I'm afraid he might call me "Charlie."

JOSEFFY. That's not so bad. (*As they turn to him questioningly*) If he's happy, there is only one thing that would make him so—his selection for some other pulpit.

MRS. JOSEFFY. That would be fine!

LAEMPFERT. And you, a rabbi's wife, not knowing right off what would make a young rabbi happy!

MRS. JOSEFFY. William is certainly a hard worker. (*As her husband says nothing*) Ephraim, you think so, don't you?

JOSEFFY. I believe I know the pulpit that has been offered him. I would be disappointed if he abrupt-

ly dropped his congregation just because they and he have not agreed on his year's continuance and have not entered into any formal contract.

LAEMPFERT (*to set Joseffy right*) I'm pretty sure they only let him stay out of respect for you, Ephraim. You know how publicly he voiced his disapproval of them and their methods. All the same, he is a clever fellow, with rather fixed ideas about how to get on.

JOSEFFY (*irritably*) To get on in the pulpit, Charles! You know how often that sort of success is merely the public's applause for oratory given over to comfortable platitudes. (*With a sigh*) However, I suppose we must tolerate that for the sake of the other things that have to be accomplished.

LAEMPFERT. We happen to live in a very practical world, Ephraim. Rabbi Pollitz calls a bigger pulpit "success" because he undoubtedly claims the bigger pulpit demands the bigger man.

MRS. JOSEFFY (*to her husband*) You look very tired. Are you sure you are feeling well?

JOSEFFY (*rousing himself and making a very evident effort to shake off his depression*) Yes. I am just a little anxious about something. (*He puts his two hands on his wife's two frail shoulders*). Rose, you are an amazingly helpful person for all your weak heart! (*He bends down and kisses her*).

MRS. JOSEFFY (*turning her head in Laempfert's direction*) A weak heart, Charles, can't be very helpful for a rabbinical head. So Ephraim must be sort of an exception.

JOSEFFY. Rose, something is going to be discussed here this morning that may be a little trying to you. It

would be folly to keep you ignorant of it, but you must meet it with a composed mind. You should be prepared for it before I meet William today.

MRS. JOSEFFY (*with a quaver in her voice*) If you mean Sidonie's interest in Christian Science—I know about that. (*Her whole body flutters under the two hands that are still resting on her shoulders*).

JOSEFFY (*dumbfounded, his hands dropping to his sides*) Why didn't you tell me?

MRS. JOSEFFY (*as if there could be no other reason*) Sidonie will tell you.

JOSEFFY. But she didn't, Rose!

MRS. JOSEFFY (*with finality*) Then she wasn't ready to do so. (*Becoming aware of his great distress*) We must be very careful with her, Ephraim.

JOSEFFY. Is that why you didn't tell me?

MRS. JOSEFFY. It was all too much for me. I didn't know what to do or how you would take it.

JOSEFFY (*shaking himself together, and seeking to rekindle her confidence*) We are all of us going to do the right thing. It isn't too late. You're not to become a prey to excitement, Rose.

MRS. JOSEFFY. I am glad you told Charles.

LAEMPFERT (*slowly*) I don't know that I've got my bearings yet sufficiently to be of much use to you all.

MRS. JOSEFFY (*alarmed by the way this is edged with disapproval*) You must avoid frightening William, Ephraim, or make him miserable. He is a very young man yet, for all his cleverness.

LAEMPFERT (*coldly*) My dear Rose, if I were you, I wouldn't worry about him. He can take care of himself. Our principal concern is Sidonie.

(*Whatever Laempfert's intention, his words make no impression on his hearer whose thoughts are with her husband. Joseffy is now near the window, with his arms folded, and gazing blankly into space.*)

MRS. JOSEFFY (*coming over to him, and touching him timidly on the arm*) What are you thinking of, Ephraim?

JOSEFFY (*turning to her*) Why has Sidonie for once misjudged my understanding? Where are our bonds of common interest? In what sort of a fool's paradise as father and daughter have we been living all these years?

MRS. JOSEFFY. You mustn't try to twist your thoughts around like that! (*She catches sight through the window of someone who is passing*). It's William! Now, Ephraim, please put this off. It would be better for Sidonie to tell him. A day cannot make much difference!

JOSEFFY. Rose, what is it that we are trying to postpone?

LAEMPFERT (*emphatically*) He is right. Ephraim mustn't be caught at a disadvantage with Pollitz, and leave himself open to the question as to why he has waited all this time. With a man like Rabbi Pollitz you have to lay your cards on the table, and do it quick!

(*There is a pause of expectancy. The buzz of the electric bell makes the three shift a little in their places. Then Mrs. Joseffy goes out into the hall.*

(*A man's voice is heard saying, "Howdy,*

*mother!" and the man himself soon appears with his arm through that of Mrs. Joseffy.*

(*Rabbi Pollitz is short, wiry, with a rather small, round head, black and very curly hair, and shrewd, quizzical brown eyes. He gives an impression of being constantly in motion, and when speaking his gestures are a picturesque elaboration of his thoughts. His voice ranges from a low guttural of sociability to an argumentative sharpness. He has plenty of dignity, but it easily slips off under the stress of excitement. It would be next to impossible to surmise his profession from his manner or his appearance. Unlike Dr. Joseffy he does not wear ministerial garb.*)

POLLITZ. Hello, everybody! (*He comes over to shake hands with Laempfert*).

LAEMPFERT (*giving his hand with a touch of condescension*) How do you do?

POLLITZ (*thoroughly at ease*) I do very well. I have just been talking with the president of another synagogue. Lichtenberg is developing sufficient poise to give his synagogue an "A-One" rating—except when he tries to follow my verbal contortions. Then it's like a lion trying to snare a fly with his paws. (*Pollitz draws two cigars out of his vest pocket, and extends one to Laempfert*). I got these from him. We are not on such bad terms, despite all the wrangling we have had about our congregation, our trustees, and our mutual disrespect.

LAEMPFERT (*who has given several vigorous shakes*)

*of the head in refusal of the cigar).* No, thank you. I have gone back to cigarettes lately.

POLLITZ. Lichtenberg's opinion of a cigarette-smoking Jewish business man would be a discourse on the bankruptcy of Judaism. I thought I had a match. (*He finds one, lights his cigar, and blowing out perfect rings of smoke as he walks across the room, is unconscious of the odd quietness of the Joseffys and Laempfert. He espies the cap and gown on the settle. To Joseffy*) Ah, so you shared honors with the Governor at the University! With the difference that you began with a quotation, and he with a comic anecdote. (Have I guessed right?

JOSEFFY (*with an effort*). It seemed to be a serious occasion for both of us.

POLLITZ. Then why didn't you try the anecdote? (To Mrs. Joseffy) Sidonie in? How is she? Wonderful, eh? God bless her!

MRS. JOSEFFY (*stumbling over the two words*) All right.

POLLITZ. That spells progress! I'm for leaving her get all the rest she wants. No activities of any kind. We mustn't take everything for granted. She's like a fine watch. Going right, thank the Lord—but don't get clumsy with it!

MRS. JOSEFFY (*welcoming this*) Yes, William; we can't be too careful.

POLLITZ. And now there's a new wrinkle. (*Looks at his cigar thoughtfully, and indulges in an impressive pause*). The outlook is that I will be as busy as some of those social rabbis when they suddenly have to brush up on their Hebrew, except that mine is a social prob-

lem. (*To Joseffy*) It isn't often that we can break bad news to the president of our synagogue, and do it cheerfully.

MRS. JOSEFFY. Do sit down, William, and tell it properly!

POLLITZ. In honor to the occasion, it should be told standing up.

LAEMPFERT. Then by all means tell it standing up!

MRS. JOSEFFY. I won't have him teased, Charles.

(*Pollitz laughs good naturedly. Joseffy goes to the settle and becomes a limp study in patience*).

POLLITZ. It is simply this: Congregation Beth Elohim of Louisville finds Bittner too ill for the New Year services and too old to continue his work, and has asked me to take his pulpit at once if possible. No trial sermon, no Bertillon finger print methods to ascertain my intellectual fitness. And here I have always been saying that the young rabbi was merely an object lesson in failure to whom successful men in the congregation could point as a warning to their sons when they got too impossible!

LAEMPFERT (*to Joseffy*) Wasn't Pfeiffer of Louisville here last week to see you?

POLLITZ (*sharply*) Was he?

(*For a moment he eyes the banker haughtily, his cigar no longer in his mouth. Then he turns with assumed indifference to listen to Joseffy's reply*).

JOSEFFY (*without positiveness*). I think they had decided on William before Pfeiffer came here. They have

been greatly worried about Bittner's health. Pfeiffer, when he dropped in on me, spoke about Sidonie, and it is possible that he thought William might prefer to remain here, now that Sidonie was somewhat better. (*He has found his way with difficulty through the explanation*).

POLLITZ (*with evident relief*) Say, that was thoughtful of Pfeiffer, wasn't it? Now, that's the sort of thing my congregation is incapable of! Do you wonder that we have been like Kilkenny cats? Not having arranged definitely with them for this year, I'm foot-loose. That's providence for you! (*To Mrs. Joseffy*) It will be rather hard for you to see me and Sidonie walk off. But it was to be expected that sooner or later I would have to pack up my spiritual handbag, study a map of the roads in our little U-S-A, and pass the word to her.

JOSEFFY (*solemnly*) After our period of unrest, we eventually find perfect accord within and without, and then our wanderings cease. I have known individuals who wandered a lifetime to find perfect accord with God. Of course, (*getting to his feet*) I congratulate you on this call. I know that you will do well by your people.

POLLITZ. Righto! Thanks!

(*The two men shake hands. Then Pollitz goes over to Mrs. Joseffy and kisses her. When he turns to Laempfert, the latter comes from behind the library table and extends his hand*).

LAEMPFERT (*as the other grasps and shakes it*) I believe that if there is one position that is built by the efforts of the man who occupies it, it is the pulpit!

POLLITZ (*warmed by the general felicitations*)

Thanks! Thanks! But without any wish to argue, I am not so sure that the rabbi can always dictate the conditions under which he works. If he could, I would not look forward with such pleasure to the farewell sermon I am going to preach. There's nothing to the new generation that I've been supervising; it's as flat as the proverbial pancake. And the older generation has grubbed away its intelligence making money for the newer one to spend. Saying the truth has hurt me more than it has hurt them. It wouldn't be so bad if on top of it all they weren't cynics and didn't have contempt for the young rabbis they are underpaying. Now that I depart, my congregation will discover virtues in me that I never really possessed. I could see it in the way Lichtenberg treated me when I told him. Why, I was almost the equal of the folks he plays poker with at the Club!

JOSEFFY. You would both have grown, William—congregation and minister. Life unfolds through the synagogue more than you yet know.

POLLITZ. Life in my congregation unfolds through gossip. Your congregation is different. You got a start of them, and they never headed you off. You will remember that when you came in charge twenty-five years ago, religion still bore an appearance of awe for the average man. Now it is often a method of advertising respectability and worldly success. Oh, I've tried hard enough to introduce Judaism among my people. (*With a shrug of the shoulders*) I think that a good deal of my trouble is that for a young rabbi I look too much like a Jew.

JOSEFFY (*feeling his way*) William, suppose Sidonie

were to ask you to stay on in Pittsburgh because she believed that the greater spiritual opportunity was here.

POLLITZ (*promptly*): No, she won't! Trust her to know what's best for me! She isn't going to ignore our future. And don't worry about my congregation! This is the most valuable lesson they could possibly get. Instead of dressing the ministry in robes of gold, they put the rabbi in the same class as the second-hand clothes man.

LAEMPFERT. May I suggest that possibly you stroked the fur the wrong way?

POLLITZ. If you mean by that my speaking right out about their failings, I answer Yes to the indictment. Since I couldn't influence them by fervor, I put pins in them. I'll admit that their attitude in return wasn't encouraging. It took all the punch out of my embryo leadership. I reached the point where it didn't seem worth while for me to extend myself, except when I was invited to deliver some address elsewhere. After they see my picture in the newspapers here, and the write-up I'm going to get from my newspaper friends, my congregation will remind each other that I had eloquence, that I was something of a Hebrew scholar, that I was really a religious man, and my wit will not be regarded merely as a form of impertinence. (*To Joseffy*) Your crowd is different. While you speak to your congregation of God, I have to explain my congregation to God. Sounds blasphemous, I know; but it comes mighty near being the truth!

MRS. JOSEFFY (*refusing to take him seriously*) William, your bark is worse than your bite.

POLLITZ (*laughing unaffectedly*) My bark has teeth in it, all the same!

JOSEFFY (*with dignity*) It is true, William, that frequently the minister has to play the part of the prompter, to put the words of God into the mouths of men. But that serves for the time being until we find the shortest road to understanding.

MRS. JOSEFFY (*interposing*) Now, Ephraim, you know that William has done very well, all things considered. Many of the people in his congregation are impossible. They are the sort of people who were always calling on Moses for miracles.

POLLITZ (*with a deep bow to her, his hand on his heart*) Thank you for those kind words! Putting me in the same class with Moses is some recommendation! You're all right, *mutterchen*! You stand up for me, and I'll give you a successful man for a son-in-law.

JOSEFFY (*coming forward*) I have stood up for you, too, William, as you know. I did not speak lightly just now when I suggested that you stay in Pittsburgh. A rather unexpected element has been injected into our various problems. For some of us it may prove a very trying element that will test us to the utmost.

POLLITZ (*looking at him wonderingly*) Hello! What's the matter now? You aren't going to give a counterblast to my good news?

MRS. JOSEFFY. Ephraim, it is possible that we take an extreme view—

POLLITZ. I thought you said Sidonie was all right!

LAEMPFERT (*feeling it incumbent upon him to reduce the tension*) She is all right and is going to stay all

right. (*To Mrs. Joseffy*) Ephraim has gone over the ground carefully with me, Rose. You can leave it to him.

POLLITZ. You're almost as mysterious as I was with Lichtenberg when I began to break the news! Anyway, I refuse to be upset! A man who has gotten a better job can well say with Mr. Browning, "God's in His heaven, and all's well with the world!"

JOSEFFY (*clumsily*) You know, William, that we called in the very best medical help available to find out what was the trouble with Sidonie.

POLLITZ (*wrinkling his forehead with surmise*) Of course you did.

JOSEFFY. The fact that the biggest men we could get seemed at a loss only indicated that science had not gotten that far. It does not lessen the grandeur of their goal.

POLLITZ (*puzzled by the defence of the medical profession*) It didn't improve their guessing. The doctors have made an art of throwing up a smoke screen of words and hiding their ignorance behind it. If a chemist or engineer would resort to guesswork like that and collect fees, he would land in jail!

LAEMPFERT (*curtly*) Isn't that a little sweeping? I don't suppose you're addicted to home remedies for your ills.

POLLITZ. Oh, I follow the crowd and get into the clutches of a physician from time to time. A drowning man catches at straws. But I've heard some of my medical friends make their private confessions. They know what side their bread is buttered on, and it isn't

buttered on the side of truth all the time. However, if I may revamp a well known witticism: the average man's trust in the doctor is the triumph of hope over experience. (*Shaking his head*) Sidonie was bound to get well without their assistance.

JOSEFFY (*troubled by this attitude*) You can't be serious! The religious man of today must stand before science as before a special revelation, young as science may be, and for all its groping. However, I am getting off the point. I am going to ask, William, whether from what you have seen of Sidonie you have any fear of her relapsing to her previous condition.

POLLITZ (*cheerfully*) I don't see why she shouldn't make progress from now on. In cases of nervous disorders,—and that's what I think it is—the mental attitude is the main thing. The very fact that she has taken the first step in shaking off her weakness will create a state of mind that will make the next step easier. I've given it a lot of thought. I've been expecting some such change all along. Until that change came, it was my business to keep her cheerful and off the morbid—yes, even when she was almost rebellious about my trying to make her laugh! (*Chuckling*) A mighty good start for a prospective husband.

MRS. JOSEFFY. She will need a lot of cheering up yet, William.

POLLITZ. There's a lot more where the rest came from. Well, folks, she has certainly handed us something to be grateful for as a start for the coming New Year!

JOSEFFY. Hasn't she spoken to you of just when the change came about?

POLLITZ. I say!—it isn't anything serious, is it? Has it anything to do with our future married life? Be as free as you like. We're all grown-up people here.

JOSEFFY (*slowly*). No, it isn't that. What I would like to know is whether Sidonie told you how she got well.

POLLITZ. How she got well? Why, no. I had an idea that she didn't know herself how it came about. (*Then he begins to stumble along in silent inquiry; and before Joseffy can frame his answer, Pollitz finds it.*) She turned to her uncle, did she?

JOSEFFY (*haltingly*). I am not so sure. In all likelihood she did.

POLLITZ (*after a pause*). That's bad! (*Quickly*) She hasn't been talking about it in public?

MRS. JOSEFFY (*sharply*). Why, of course, she hasn't!

JOSEFFY. I wouldn't speak with such assurance, Rose.

POLLITZ. On second consideration, I don't think she has. But that's no guarantee that she won't. Well, she certainly has got me guessing!

MRS. JOSEFFY (*grieved*). William!

POLLITZ. It's all right, *mutterchen*. It happened to strike me that for a stickler for Judaism like Sidonie to resort to "Science and Health" must literally have meant hell for her.

JOSEFFY (*vehemently*). At least we know that the book never healed her!

POLLITZ. How do we know? Cures through suggestion are no new thing. (*Thoughtfully*) She must be pretty badly tangled up in it since she is feeling better. What a time she must have reconciling Mary Baker Eddy and Moses!

JOSEFFY (*shortly*) Sydney Rosenthal could never reconcile them. How can she?

POLLITZ. Well, that's no reason why she shouldn't be trying. But let's forget her uncle; her case isn't in the same class. We can make Sidonie see reason, whereas there never was any hope for him. We've got to admit that she had a better excuse for fooling around the font of perpetual life and divine mind than her uncle. Rosenthal weighed approximately two hundred pounds and had a good appetite. It's true that when that amount of avoirdupois gets romantic, it goes the limit! What but an incurably romantic disposition made him rush to the defence of the Perkins woman when that sick child died on her hands? Whatever made him turn Christian Scientist but the romantic desire to be on the side he defended? Then he laps up Eddyism like a cat lapping up cream: romantic fervor again! What mattered the high place it cost him in the Jewish community! What mattered the synagogue of which he was a president which was endangered by what he did!—

MRS. JOSEFFY (*with quiet emphasis*) William! (*As he pauses*) There are times when you do want to be an orator.

(*Pollitz is awakened to the fact that she has been a listener to his tirade. He is genuinely sorry, and going over to her, takes her hand and pats it*).

POLLITZ. Be forgiving to stupidity and you'll be kind to me. I don't know how I came to lose the feeling that he is your brother. I wouldn't hurt you for the

world! That's right, isn't it? (*He puts her hand against his cheek, and sways his head from side to side*).

JOSEFFY. We gain nothing by emphasizing Sydney Rosenthal's contribution to this state of affairs.

POLLITZ (*still holding Mrs. Joseffy's hand against his cheek*) Sounds like Hamlet with Hamlet left out.

JOSEFFY. Sidonie will meet us with the statement that she is no longer an invalid. What better argument does she need?

POLLITZ. And will point out that we, a couple of theologians, weren't of the slightest help to her. (*He turns to Laempfert*) We've got to get busy, that's all! Train our guns on her delusions, and blow the whole thing away.

LAEMPFERT (*annoyed by Pollitz's fluctuating moods*) Let us hope so.

POLLITZ. What are her wits against ours, despite all her training in religious thought?

MRS. JOSEFFY. But no arguments, William!

POLLITZ (*spreading out his two hands*) *Mutterchen*, we break no butterflies on the wheel. As ministers, it is our business to be circumspect about the sex that creates so many complex problems with respect to their souls.

JOSEFFY (*irritably*) Do be serious! Don't you realize that on our threshold is possibly the most overwhelming difficulty we have encountered in our lives?

LAEMPFERT (*to strengthen the rebuke*) It's not how grave it is now. It's how grave it will become.

POLLITZ (*driven to the opposite position by his dislike of the banker*) Well, as far as I'm concerned, I refuse to be upset about it! My guess is that when we

get her properly enthusiastic about my new pulpit, and broach the question of our becoming man and wife at a near date, we will find the old-time Sidonie again. She lived too much by herself up there in Michigan during the last three months. I'm sorry my summer studies at Chicago tied me up; but the sooner I get the "D. D." at the end of my name, the better all around. (*Finding in Laempfert's cold stare an accusation of evasion*) I've never been an occupant of the mourner's bench.

LAEMPFERT (*brushing imaginary cigarette ashes from his vest*) I may be an easily frightened man, but this looks exceptionally serious to me. I wonder that you can be so easy in your mind about it.

POLLITZ. It may be we who are making it serious by going to extremes, Mr. Laempfert.

JOSEFFY. We must have foresight, William!

MRS. JOSEFFY (*at no one in particular*) It seems so strange that you should be nagging William when he is trying to do what he thinks is right! I'm glad he's not worried. You are extreme, Ephraim. I'm surprised at you!

JOSEFFY. Do I have to tell you, Rose, what my love for that child means?

LAEMPFERT. We would be fools if we didn't prepare for eventualities.

POLLITZ. Very well! We'll get Sidonie down for the news I have for her. Then we will have a calm little chat with her. No bull in the china shop methods! She is too fragile for that. But she will want the chat—and the help. Is she at home? (*Mrs. Joseffy, to whom this is addressed, nods helplessly*). Don't you worry,

*mutterchen!* We'll make her comfortable, and let her unburden herself. It's the best thing for her, and she's expecting it, and perhaps praying for it. So don't look as if you were going to sacrifice your only daughter on the altar of our logic.

MRS. JOSEFFY (*at bay*) Perhaps she should talk to you. But none of you will forget your importance.

POLLITZ (*laughing*) We shall be humble. We shan't use our masculine prerogative to thump our chests like big bass drums. Having been the wife of a rabbi, the big bass drum ought not to frighten you. (*With a glance at Joseffy*) I know that the head of the house is thinking that I'm fiddling while Rome is burning!—

(*The effort to lessen the strain fails, and he is left flat in gesture and tone. Mrs. Joseffy goes over to her husband, and he puts his arms about her silently*).

MRS. JOSEFFY. Perhaps it is the only way, Ephraim.

JOSEFFY. You are willing?

MRS. JOSEFFY. All this uncertainty can't go on any longer. It's of her I'm thinking.

JOSEFFY. We must be prepared for the shock of finding a totally different individual from the one we expect.

MRS. JOSEFFY. Yes, but she has to be prepared for us, too.

POLLITZ (*promptly*) Knowing Sidonie, I would say she is! If, however, we find that she becomes restive, we can stop right there and call it a day's work.

JOSEFFY (*as if the decision had been in his hand from the first*) Very well. But there must be no belittling of fundamentals, William. You cannot make it

look like some harmless escapade, and let it go at that. Better silence than indecision!

POLLITZ. That will depend on Sidonie. If we don't walk gingerly, there, waiting for her, are the arms of her uncle.

LAEMPFERT (*looking at his watch*) The morning is going very fast.

POLLITZ. Ah, you mustn't overlook how far we have travelled in the last few minutes. Now we'll go on our errand of mercy. (*To Mrs. Joseffy*) Steady, all!

MRS. JOSEFFY (*hopefully*) You are very good, William.

POLLITZ. I carry the great umbrella of success against all storms. That's the explanation!

LAEMPFERT. You must extend it far enough to cover Sidonie, Mr. Pollitz.

POLLITZ (*with a bow*) I will let her have it all, if necessary.

(*Feeling that he has had the last word, he jauntily goes to the rear door, and steps into the hall. He gives two sharp whistles. Soon in answer comes an echo of his call.*

(*At the sound, Joseffy, who is near the table, looks nervously in Laempfer's direction. That man, who has comfortably ensconced himself in a chair beside the fireplace, his knees crossed, and his plump hands clasped in his lap, is staring at the floor. Joseffy looks in the direction of his wife. She has found her way to the settle, where she sits very erect with frightened eyes. He goes over to her, and bending down, whispers some-*

*thing. She makes a dismal attempt to smile. He strokes her hair as he watches the door through which Pollitz has gone.*

*(The meeting of the lovers at the foot of the stairs has been out of view of those in the room. When the two appear, Pollitz's arm is about Sidonie's waist, and his head is tipped affectionately against hers. Sidonie, at first glance, suggests neither the stamina nor astuteness necessary to counter the indignation or calm judgment of anyone of the three men. She is of medium height, fragile, with dark, regular features, lack-lustre brown eyes, a wide forehead that is perhaps a little too broad for classic proportions, and has a great quantity of raven hair. Her motions are slow, as if she were uncertain of the strength at her command. Her tone is as dull as her eyes; but when she is roused, her voice becomes metallically sharp. At such moments she does not so much convey the impression of mental flexibility as of stubbornness that will persist along a certain line of thinking. Were the color of good health in her cheeks, and a happy light in her eyes, she could be readily catalogued as an "attractive" girl).*

POLLITZ (*uproariously*) Hello, people! Look upon the Daughter of Heaven! She almost came running down the stairs! Even allowing for the proper incentive that was waiting at the foot of the stairs, it was going some!

*(Mrs. Joseffy has gotten up and is about to come forward, but pauses when Sidonie speaks).*

SIDONIE. How are you, Mr. Charles?

(*Laempfert gravely walks over to her, and as she extends her hand, takes it, and without speaking, resolutely leads her to the settle, Pollitz relinquishing her with a laugh.*)

LAEMPFERT. You must lie down. You have no business going up and down stairs.

(*Her mother is at once at Sidonie's side, when the latter lies down, fixes the cushions under her head and draws up a chair beside her. Joseffy goes behind the library table; Pollitz stands in front of the fireplace; Laempfert takes a chair near the foot of the settle.*)

SIDONIE (*speaking very low*) It is so dear of you all! How is Geraldine, Mr. Charles?

LAEMPFERT. Very, very busy. Occupied with the trying ambition of self-entertainment. She has read all the silly novels, seen all the silly plays, danced all the exciting dances, and now wants a high-powered car.

SIDONIE. That wasn't the daughter of yours that came to see me yesterday.

LAEMPFERT. Oh, I'll admit she's a clever child! But she will have to be more clever than that to get her fast car!

SIDONIE. You could share the use of that kind of a car.

LAEMPFERT (*breaking into a smile*) You're almost as bad as she is!

POLLITZ. Sidonie in a high-powered car, dusting the pedestrians off the street, would be a sight for the gods. (*Rubbing his hands gleefully*) That reminds me, Sid,

that you and I face the prospect of living on a new plane of existence. Guess where?

SIDONIE (*turning her head in his direction*) I don't understand, Billy.

POLLITZ. My dear, Horace Greeley, didn't have couples in mind when he spoke about going west. You and I shall stop off at Louisville. Make something of that with your woman's wit!

SIDONIE. Louisville? (*Pleased*) Oh! So they have decided, after all, to give Dr. Bittner an assistant. And it's you, Billy!

POLLITZ (*drawing himself up*) An assistant, did you say? The future, my dear, should never be a pale under-study for the past. I wouldn't want to be a cabin boy to his captaincy, just because the bark is named "Louisville." Nor do I want to alternate with him in the pulpit for the sake of the arguments that fit into his mental Noah's ark. No. Bittner will at last have time to devote himself to both his English and his Hebrew—good hobbies, too, I assure you!

SIDONIE. You're never as cruel as you sound, Billy. So we won't pay any attention to that, will we, daddy?

JOSEFFY (*coming out of his thoughts with a start*) What?

SIDONIE (*turning away her head and shutting her eyes*) Billy, daddy didn't even hear you. I'm glad Louisville asked you. They're very nice people. (*Turning to him again*) But what about your congregation here? What are they going to do during the Holy Days?

POLLITZ. Sid, there is an old song entitled "Absence makes the heart grow fonder." That's me, and that's them.

SIDONIE. You'll have to correct your thought on that, Billy. (*Immediately, as if that was not quite the phraseology she would have preferred to use then and there*) What you said sounded positively vindictive!

JOSEFFY (*clearing his throat*) William's affairs are entirely his own, of course. But I was thinking—in fact, I had suggested—

SIDONIE (*as he hesitates*) Yes, do speak up, daddy doodles. (*Brightly*) Why, except for Billy, we are all as solemn as if he had been offered a position in some little town in Mississippi! After all, he is going to get the work he wanted.

JOSEFFY (*clumsily essaying cheerfulness*) I don't think, dear, that any solemnity of ours could put a damper on William.

SIDONIE. Good for you, dad! (*She throws him a kiss. He moves restlessly in his seat even as he smiles in response*).

POLLITZ (*referring to the kiss*) A prima donna could not have done it more gracefully or naturally.

SIDONIE. I remember we interrupted dad, Billy.

JOSEFFY (*hesitating with the difficulty of making a new start*) The fact is—what I wanted to say was—since his leaving his congregation just before the Holy Days would impose a hardship on it, William might ask that the Louisville call be held over until he can get away with better grace. Of course, the bigger step would be to refuse the Louisville call altogether, and to throw a beam of light before these backward people here by the unexpected sacrifice.

POLLITZ (*almost crossly*) The most tragic thing in life is misplaced goodness. In my case it would throw

out of gear all the machinery of ambition I've got. It's a darned sight harder for a little man to reach up to the top shelf of the world where the good things are kept.

SIDONIE (*turning her head to look out of the window*) I think Billy is on the right road, dad. You have always said that for people not to go right ahead when they have the enthusiasm is as bad as a defeat.

POLLITZ. Spoken like a good Jewess! There's the history of our race in a nutshell—ever seeking the freedom of spirit through the joy of achievement. We are Henri Bergson's Time, the ultimate reality!

SIDONIE (*a little more alert*) Is Bergson your latest love, Billy? You'll have to tell me all about him.

POLLITZ. He happens to be another Jew who has dropped a bombshell of original thought into the camp of the commonplace.

SIDONIE (*her gaze still averted*) It seems to me, Billy, that as Jews we have too much vanity about what we do. I know that as a Zionist you don't like me to say that. I always argued against our race egotism when daddy read me his sermons, and I now feel sure that I was right. Our spirituality isn't Jewish only. It's God's gift to every human being.

(*This has been quite an effort for her, and her eyes shut wearily. Her auditors, aware of a new and impelling thought behind the words, are quick to react to them; but the reaction varies with each of her hearers. Pollitz is merely curious; Joseffy tries to conceal his dismay; Laempfert is angry; Mrs. Joseffy shows fear.*)

LAEMPFERT (*harshly*) That sounds rather hard on a

people who have sought nothing but their legitimate place, and have had to fight every inch of the way.

SIDONIE (*opening her eyes, and turning to face him*) But, Mr. Charles, I don't quite know what the Jew's legitimate place is, because I feel that he is still seeking it.

POLLITZ (*gleefully*) What a subject for a sermon! Why not for my first sermon at Louisville? And you'll be sitting there to hear me preach it, Sidonie, girl! My! My! (*Rocking his head from side to side*) When I think how the women will stare to see you walking down the aisle after all the talk about your having been an invalid! My entrance into Louisville will be in a veritable blaze of interest!

SIDONIE (*her voice sounding a little thin in the electric atmosphere*) Billy, suppose we agree never to talk about my having been a feeble, useless girl. Please, please, Billy, take my health for granted! You know how you laugh at rich men who speak with pride about having once been poor. I am rich who was dreadfully poor, but I would rather not keep pointing to it.

POLLITZ. Where, then, is our gratitude?

SIDONIE. Your gratitude, mother's daddy's, mine—yes! But the rest of the world may be too full of false notions, may be too excited. Not you, of course, Mr. Charles! How dreadful it is to be discussed, or to have gatherings in celebration of one's getting about! That's why I let the girls go away a little while ago without seeing them.

POLLITZ. You are right! By the Eternal, you are right! We will henceforth accept you are you are at this very hour.

SIDONIE (*sitting up eagerly*) Will you do it? Will you try? If only you knew how I have suffered listening at summer resorts to poor-witted people discussing their ailments in order to make them real for other people. (*With a laugh*) At times I could have clawed them! But we're all healthy minded here, so it will be easy for us to keep off that subject. Oh, I'm so glad that I can tell you how I feel about it!

POLLITZ. Another sermon pat to hand, dealing with the foul fiends of the imaginary realm of maladies of idle men and women! You shall write most of it for me, Sidonie.

SIDONIE (*sinking back with a sigh of contentment*) If you'll let me. At least I would like you to fully understand what I mean, Billy.

(*Her father gets up and comes over to her. He is very pale, and the ordeal plays havoc with the manner in which he puts the question he wishes to ask*).

JOSEFFY. Sidonie, will you—do you—mind telling us what it is you want us to understand?

(*She looks at him inquiringly, then lifts her eyes over his head in silent debate.*

(*Suddenly she gets up from the settle without any sign of wavering, and stands in front of her father, with her hands folded over each other, a simple picture in a complex situation*).

SIDONIE. Dad, perhaps you think that I haven't been honest with you.

JOSEFFY. You have lived too long in this house to be anything but honest.

POLLITZ (*whose hand is unsteady as he lights a fresh cigar*) It's all right, you know, Sid. You're talking to intelligent people of your own circle.

SIDONIE (*who has not taken her eyes from her father*) I think I have been putting it off because I wasn't quite clear what, exactly, I could tell you. If I had spoken unprepared, it wouldn't have explained anything. (*To Pollitz*) Of course you're intelligent. But how could any of you have understood without a long explanation just what I had gone through for many months?

MRS. JOSEFFY (*standing up and taking a step as if to get between Sidonie and her father*) You are not going to become worked up!

JOSEFFY. Your mother is right, Sidonie. Unless we are sure that we can approach this dispassionately, it were better to stop at once.

(*Sidonie is about to turn away, as if this were a welcome respite. This is succeeded by a moment of uncertainty. Then she finds strength enough to carry through her original intention*).

SIDONIE. You mustn't take away my chance to say that I am grateful for getting better. I really came down stairs to find some way to tell you. It only needed your asking.

JOSEFFY (*trying to lighten his tone*) Of course. To us who have shared our lives so long with you, it will be as if we were really listening to our own thoughts. It is very easy, very natural. (*He pulls an armchair forward for her*).

SIDONIE. Let me stand a little while longer, just for

the wonder of it! Think of the time when I would have preferred to lie down rather than to stand or even sit.

JOSEFFY (*moved*) You have been a constant lesson in patience to us.

SIDONIE (*her recital simplicity itself*) I wasn't patient, daddy. It was all put on. I was resorting to will power. You always talked about the importance of having a methodical plan of life, so I tried to forget my weakness by working out some plan that would do, and I believed in none of them. Those outlines for sermons I wrote for you, the Hebrew I studied, the children's stories I scribbled for the Jewish magazines, the reports of your work that I used to prepare—they were rather helpless ways of keeping from being swamped by misery. (*She sits down now as if weighed by the memory of this misery. Her mother stands back of her chair*).

POLLITZ. That make-believe resulted in some excellent work, Sid. You gave a few healthy people cause for envy.

SIDONIE. Why deceive ourselves, Billy? It was darkness for me, and I was stumbling all the time. At the beginning of this summer it seemed worse. As I looked out on the lake day after day, I would say to myself that the distant horizon represented the line where my ill-health stopped. If only I could get beyond it! But I knew that no matter how far I went, the line would keep retreating, health would be always out of reach. That was the sort of mind I was living with. How could I go on like that?

(*Joseffy is hard hit. He puts out his hand swiftly in a gesture of protest, but Pollitz speaks ahead of him*).

POLLITZ. We were trying to feel our way, too, you know, Sid. We had to believe in the future, so that's perhaps why we never gave way to morbidity. As Jews we have our everlasting faith in God.

JOSEFFY (*to Pollitz with a touch of sternness*) God was present even during what you call her morbidity—visibly present!

SIDONIE. Oh, daddy, Billy didn't mean to take me to task. He must have put himself very much in my place, and he naturally was driven to the other extreme.

JOSEFFY (*apologetically*) I know. The only question that William's remark brings forward is just what we were doing about your future. Certainly we had not exhausted medical aid. I hope we never have conveyed the idea that we were helpless in that respect.

SIDONIE. Of course, we could have kept on trying. But it did seem helpless. Surely, dad, you must have begun to feel doubts about that!

JOSEFFY. Then we did make you feel that we had given up hope!

SIDONIE. How could you have pretended otherwise in the face of repeated failure? What purpose would it have served?

JOSEFFY. Because I came closer to God through it.

SIDONIE (*with a sigh*) I suppose you expected me to do it, too. There was only one book in the Bible that I could go to in my bitterness, and that was Job. Job's suffering I understood.

LAEMPFERT (*barely avoiding a scowl*) Come, don't make it too hard, Sidonie.

SIDONIE (*at a loss*) Why, I am trying to make it

easier, Mr. Charles! I want dad to see that we aren't getting anywhere by talking about physicians. Despite them it was plain that I was daily getting worse. I was living in the very depths of despair. So much so that one morning this summer I felt how necessary it was that I should no longer be alive, for everybody's sake, for my sake most of all.

*(There is a general stir of horror, pity, and, in Laempfert's case, indignation. Mrs. Joseffy, with a smothered cry, turns away that the others may not see her weep. Laempfert is in revolt because he is deeply moved and does not want to surrender to that feeling. Pollitz while stirred is also fascinated, as if a new Sidonie had been revealed to him. Joseffy is so shocked that the man-in-the-pulpit in him comes uppermost).*

JOSEFFY. You could not have read your Job aright, dear! To him God was an ever-participating entity, and I cannot help but feel that God was beginning to be lost in your reckoning.

SIDONIE. Yes, daddy, I did feel that God had forgotten me. Don't have contempt for me. As I looked at things then, if God had indeed forgotten, it wouldn't make much difference whether I lived or not. If I could stop everything in me that was suffering, even if that meant stopping myself, it would be a reminder to Him that I had been passed by.

POLLITZ (*explosively*) Lord, how blind the rest of us were! And not a word to me, Sid! Think of brewing that sort of hell's compound for solitary absorption!

SIDONIE (*with a slow shake of the head*) Yes, it was

indescribably dreadful! But the light eventually had to break through. I was bound to see that I had never understood God, that all along I had been worshipping mechanically.

JOSEFFY (*looking towards Laempfert*) That is not far removed from questions I put to myself during her many days of illness. How can I blame her?

POLLITZ. It makes me think of student days when we used to wrestle with metaphysical problems. Fortunately, we didn't all of us wind up as sceptics.

LAEMPFERT (*his tone very deep*) A little more questioning like that, and you have the revolutionist with the torch, ready to burn down everything that is dear to us.

JOSEFFY. But, Charles, the world will always ask fundamental questions. It is our business to understand what prompts the asking, and to meet the issue judiciously. (*To Sidonie—lovingly*) Dear, why didn't you come to us?—to me, anyway?

SIDONIE. I'm sorry if I've hurt you. But, dad, if you will look back, in all our worry, in all our talk about my illness, our mention of God's name was rather casual. It may have been that you did not want me to feel that perhaps I was being punished for something. We did pray to Him once in a while that He should withdraw what we called His "afflicting hand," but we never were positive that He would really help.

JOSEFFY (*chilled by the challenge which this carries*) I am not so sure, Sidonie, that you haven't been misreading your Judaism. I have never had the effrontery to insist on Divine help. (*More quietly*) But we needn't discuss that, since the question of the efficacy of prayer is a much mooted point in Judaism. I am going to ask

you something else, Sidonie, something to which we were bound to come sooner or later. You need not answer it if you do not wish to. (*He launches the question with a visible effort*) Would your doubts have gone so deep if you had not been swayed by the thought that your uncle had also asked such questions and had answered them in a certain way?

MRS. JOSEFFY (*choking down her tears—pleadingly*) Ephraim!

SIDONIE It's all right, mommy. You mustn't be anxious about me. I am feeling very well. I am not tired at all. It's been a help to me. I feel so much freer.

MRS. JOSEFFY (*grateful that they have not seen her tears, and speaking at a gallop so as not to lose courage*) I am not the one who is afraid!

SIDONIE. Good, mommy! Everyone has been wonderful. I never expected that they would talk so forbearingly.

JOSEFFY (*looking from Laempfert to Pollitz*) I think we have made a start, and can stop for the time being.

SIDONIE (*in surprise*) But what about me? (*Her tone is almost child-like; but as she grips the arms of her chair and talks, she appears to dominate the scene*). You asked me a very natural question, dad. It happens that what we are talking about does lead to Uncle Sydney. When I first thought of him in connection with learning something about Christian Science, it wasn't in the belief that I would get much help in my illness. I had always been puzzled about his going to Science. He had not suffered physically or mentally. I couldn't understand why he left the synagogue even though he did be-

come a Scientist. Perhaps it was because of the feeling against him and the mean things that were said.

POLLITZ (*without particular contrition, but rather with an object in view*) I believe I was a great offender in that particular respect once in a while. I called him a "renegade Jew."

MRS. JOSEFFY (*wincing*) William—

SIDONIE (*interposing*) One of Billy's lapses into thoughtlessness, mother. I don't think Uncle Sydney minds that expression. I've heard him use it himself.

POLLITZ. You don't say so! In what connection?

SIDONIE. He learned that someone had called him that, and evidently was concerned because I might hear it too. So he said to me that there were two kinds of renegade Jews: the one kind loves the non-Jew as much as he does the Jew; the other hates the non-Jew as much as he does the Jew.

MRS. JOSEFFY. Your uncle's heart is big enough to contain the whole world! There isn't anyone in this room for whom he hasn't a kind thought.

POLLITZ (*with an involuntary shrug of the shoulders*) That sort of a philosophy keeps one from being lonely.

SIDONIE. What a pity that all of you have lost touch with him!

LAEMPFERT (*coldly*) Not altogether. His standing as a lawyer brings him a lot of clients, with some of whom I am bound to come in contact. As for his having kind thoughts for me, Rose, (*turning to her*) I am afraid that I am not worthy of them in view of what I think of him.

POLLITZ (*with a hasty glance at Sidonie*) We are counting on you, Mr. Laempfert, to keep us to the point.

LAEMPFERT (*haughtily*) If you will give me an op-

portunity. (*To Sidonie*) My attitude towards your uncle will be clear if you stop to think that when he rejected the synagogue, and ceased to be its president, that it became my important duty to try to undo a great deal of harm he had done. Your father could not, because of the strange position in which he found himself.

(*Sidonie, in the face of his forcefulness, for the first time loses something of her air of confidence*).

POLLITZ. It seems to me that we haven't as yet fully heard what Sidonie has to say, and we are in no position to get any clear viewpoint. Between the time this summer when she was ready to give up the fight, and this moment, a lot of things have happened. Sidonie, will you give us an idea of them?

SIDONIE (*who appears not to have heard Pollitz*) Don't think, Mr. Charles, that I didn't perceive at the time Uncle Sydney left us how important it was that we Jews stand together. I didn't quite understand what made him take such a step suddenly without consulting all of you.

LAEMPFERT. My dear child, that is nothing to the way he goes about smiling! It's as if the wrong had been on our side!

SIDONIE. It isn't easy for him.

POLLITZ (*airily*) Practice makes perfect. One begins by diluting one's hatred.

JOSEFFY (*with a glance of warning*) . We must be careful, William. We must not concede to the Christians the triumph of having discovered the need of loving one's neighbors.

SIDONIE (*surprised*) It sounds so bitter, daddy!

JOSEFFY. Sidonie, do I have to tell you, of all people, that bitterness is a cup I have drained many times in the fifteen months since your uncle left us? His going challenged the synagogue as having little to give, except certain racial meat and drink. So fearful were we of the effect his resignation might have on our people in other parts of the country, that I can now tell you we worked desperately to silence talk. The Jew is in too vulnerable a position. When he is hit that way, he can never ask for sympathy.

SIDONIE. Yes, dad. Yet in the times I have gone to see him since then, Uncle Sydney never said a word to me about his new faith. It couldn't have been easy for him, when he believed he could help me through it.

POLLITZ (*with a wave of his cigar*) I personally admit the mystery of that. It is particularly startling with so clever a man. He may have been trying to help you, Sid, without your being aware of it.

SIDONIE. According to Science, he would have had to ask me to let him.

POLLITZ. Then there were other reasons. You know, you can't explain a man like your uncle from shallow premises. I certainly enjoyed going to court to see him at work, and watch him turn the unexpected trick. (*Abruptly*) At any rate, you did eventually go to him for your difficulty.

SIDONIE. When the misery became too great—

POLLITZ (*hurriedly*) My dear, perhaps I am jealous of the fact that on the day when you thought of sinister things—of death—we here seemed a negligible factor.

SIDONIE. What right, Billy, had I to be thinking of

anyone to whom I had been such a burden? If it had been possible for you to help me, the miracle would have come long before:

JOSEFFY (*conscious of the challenge*) Out of the mercy of the Most High was bound to come your release.

SIDONIE. Yes, dad.

JOSEFFY (*painstakingly, so that she may grasp his point*) Perhaps, like the rest of us, you had been too impatient. Of course, when you rose up in resistance against the despair, when you began to take stock of yourself—

SIDONIE (*with certainty*) No, dad! It was not like that!

JOSEFFY. At least you have gotten rid of the nervousness arising from fear:

SIDONIE. I have gotten rid of the idea of fear, I think. I wish we all could.

POLLITZ. I am not so sure that we ought, Sid. Fear is one point on the universal compass by which the human race is guided.

SIDONIE. Then we can't mean the same thing by it. For instance, you fear that my present strength may be temporary. I refuse to recognize the reality of fear at all.

POLLITZ (*to Joseffy*) It is possible to build a Jewish Science on some such idea as that:

SIDONIE (*eagerly*) Can we? Can we see through Judaism what Jesus saw that showed all things to be spiritual? Dad, that is what I have been trying to find for myself before I was ready to talk to you!

JOSEFFY. Ah, but meanwhile you may be throwing away the substance for the shadow!

SIDONIE (*after a pause*) Dad, believing certain things for many years did not seem to make much difference about the things that I wanted—like good health and peace of mind. Now I've got to see why they didn't. I've got to go to the very end of the road.

JOSEFFY (*trying not to show his despair*) But the risk, child!

POLLITZ. Sid, my girl, your uncle never came back along that road, with all his astuteness. Don't let yourself be swept away by words. Take your time.

SIDONIE. You forget, Billy, how long I have been in the thick of the fight dad has put up for Israel. I even have had hopes that a woman would yet stand in the Jewish pulpit and preach.

POLLITZ (*smiling at Joseffy*) That isn't as remote as one might believe, eh?

SIDONIE. When I think of the marvellous grasp of the Bible which Mrs. Eddy had, and the use to which she put it, nothing seems impossible.

LAEMPFERT (*abruptly*) I think it would be of greater interest to us to know how you got hold of her book, Sidonie.

SIDONIE. Surely, if it will interest you. (*She bends forward*). That day when it seemed so hard to go on, I suddenly decided to write Uncle Sydney, and to ask him what I should do. When I dropped the letter into the mail box, I was astonished to think that I hadn't asked him months before.

POLLITZ. I suppose he sent you "Science and Health."

SIDONIE. Yes. But there wasn't a single line accompanying it.

POLLITZ. Queer!

SIDONIE. What would you have done then, Billy, if you had been in my place?

POLLITZ. Had you never read the book before?

SIDONIE. A little of it once, with several girls, for amusement. Dad, when the book came, I wrote you a letter.

JOSEFFY (*surprised*) I never got it!

SIDONIE. No, I never sent it. Instead, I sent Mrs. Eddy's book back to uncle.

POLLITZ. But you looked into it before you returned it, didn't you?

SIDONIE. Not with any hope of finding anything that would help me. I could make very little of the argument. Here and there it was intelligible. I found conclusions that were uplifting. But I got too bitter at last to be patient. When I sent back the book, I was relieved. I picked up my Bible afterwards to see if the idea of God as Love could be consistently applied. (*To her father*) Could there be any harm in that?

JOSEFFY. No, not if you are unwilling to go to the very end with this search for a new explanation of your Bible.

SIDONIE. The end, dad? Why, we're only at the beginning! Think of the Bible healing! Shall I stop finding out why?

POLLITZ (*throwing himself into the breach once more*) What did your uncle write you when you sent back his book?

SIDONIE. Nothing at all.

POLLITZ (*unable to repress a chuckle*) The calcula-

tions go wrong once more! A "take it or leave it" attitude that put the next step up to you, Sid.

SIDONIE. Why should he have written me? I didn't write him when I returned the book. Afterwards I was sorry that I hadn't, because my silence might have hurt him. Yet I couldn't say anything at the time that would not hurt more. (*As if they must know why*) I know now that he couldn't have minded.

JOSEFFY (*with finality*) I think that for the present we have gone far enough, Sidonie. This is a strain to us all. You have been down long enough, and unless you would like William to get you a car and drive out, you should return to your room. I will come up later.

SIDONIE (*insistent*) But I'm resting here! My very activity now gives me a feeling of comfort. It's the hope, the certainty!

POLLITZ. All right, Sid; then you may as well come back to your narrative about your uncle and the book.

SIDONIE. Yes, you ought to know everything! Just after I sent the book back, I was lying on the porch, looking out at the lake. I was fretful even at the motion of the motor boats, they seemed so alive. I was miles deep in numbness. Without any reason, I recalled a passage that is in the preface of Mrs. Eddy's book: "To those leaning on the sustaining infinite, today is big with blessings." I repeated the words several times. Then I tried to understand them as they might apply to my own needs. (*Spreading out her arms*) All my numbness and weakness left me! I sat up easily. I walked down from the porch without any trouble. And I walked out with sure steps to the beach. It was un-

believable! Dad, the water seemed like a glad, living thing running up to welcome me!

(*She laughs out, joyous with the remembrance. Then there is silence.*)

MRS. JOSEFFY (*resenting the lack of response of the three men*) It was so!

POLLITZ. You have read, Sidonie, about the miracles at Lourdes.

SIDONIE. If those who recover there feel as I did, then I am thankful for them, no matter who they are or where they are. I only hope that they don't afterwards have the fears that I had. I could not help asking myself: Suppose my weakness came back if I doubted? You see, I wanted to hold on tight to the sudden strength, and doubt might be a thief that would take it away.

(*Laempfert shifts his gaze from Sidonie to her father, and sees a man who is in the grip of just that fear of an ebb in Sidonie's strength through doubt.*)

JOSEFFY. You did not write me because of that?

SIDONIE (*hesitating*) I did sit down to write you. After the first few lines, the weakness came back. I was very ill after that.

MRS. JOSEFFY (*determined to have their sympathy*) Terribly ill! You remember, Ephraim?

JOSEFFY. In the early part of August? (*His wife nods*). I was away at the Conference.

POLLITZ. Yes, I remember it, too. I was in the midst of some very hot days, and when you wrote, *mutterchen*, it didn't depress the temperature. I think I steadied my-

self a bit by quoting the old refrain about "pushing them clouds away!"

SIDONIE (*brightly*) Good for you, Billy! The clouds were sure to go! After my taste of strength, the world could never be the same again. You know, at first I thought Divine anger had struck at me to punish me for demanding so much. You see, God as an Avenger was still a habit of thought.

POLLITZ. Such an interpretation, however, could hardly be satisfactory after even a cursory reading of "Science and Health." (*As Sidonie looks puzzled, in her failure to understand whether he speaks from sympathy or in criticism*) It's all right, girlie. So far, from what you say, there was no great divergence from your Judaism. In the world of spirit, the great stream washes us all. You should have written me frankly at the time, because, taking me less seriously than your father, it would have been easier for you.

SIDONIE (*unexpectedly*) I didn't want just a hand-shake.

(*Its bluntness makes Pollitz laugh*).

MRS. JOSEFFY. She didn't mean to be unkind, William.

POLLITZ. But we've strayed from the story again. When you had your relapse, Sid, you did finally put your troubles squarely up to your uncle, didn't you?

SIDONIE. No. I was too ashamed. There was a Christian Scientist in a cottage nearby. I had seen her reading "Science and Health"—and she loaned me her copy until she got one for me.

POLLITZ. This time Mrs. Eddy was clearer. *Nicht wahr?*

SIDONIE. Why, yes. Some of it that seemed mere words before was amazingly lucid.

POLLITZ (*coming over to her, and putting an arm about her shoulders*) And here you are, thank the Lord, growing stronger and getting weller every minute!

SIDONIE. The healing was not as quick as that, Billy. But I got rid of my depression. With that I also got rid of my feeling of intolerance towards Christian Science. I was ashamed to think that my Judaism could be so narrow, when I could make it as broad as I wished. I saw that my attitude towards Uncle Sydney was just pride and stubbornness. As I grew ashamed of it, it was just as if I had been pulled out of some very deep, dark well. When I had strength enough to write, I asked uncle to have Christian Science treatment for me. Perhaps, dad, I should have written you before I did that, but I was afraid of the dreadful relapse.

POLLITZ (*intervening to help her father*) You've got us in a tangle there, for you ask us to ignore practical considerations. (*To Joseffy*) We're practically knotted into her dilemma, you see. It's tremendously ironic!

LAEMPFERT. It sounds to me more like confusion than irony. (*To Sidonie*) I suppose you were waiting for more strength to speak to your father.

SIDONIE. No, Mr. Charles. I wanted to be mentally sure of my ground in order not to ask questions that might clear themselves up of their own accord.

JOSEFFY (*unable to hide his commingling of despair and chagrin*) Child! (*He turns away to impose silence on himself*).

SIDONIE. Dad, what harm could there be in waiting to find out where I stood? During all the years that I sat

below your pulpit, and heard you expound the Bible and Judaism, I was being prepared for any question that might arise. You don't really think that I am a child, daddy? Or is there anything you have kept from me? —doubts that you have never been able to clear up in your own mind?—

JOSEFFY. I don't know what you mean. (*After a pause*) Since you shared my thoughts and my work, you should know that I have concealed nothing from you. For the same reason, you should be able to confront any phase of Christianity properly.

POLLITZ. Sid, you certainly know how Christological tendencies have been worked into the King James version of the Bible.

SIDONIE. The King James translators did not understand the spirit of the New Testament, wonderful men though they were.

POLLITZ. Then we shall go back over our own literature and show you that Mrs. Eddy has been antedated. She hasn't stumbled on anything new.

SIDONIE. You mean there were Jews who saw what she did? That's what I want to know! If so, there are grounds for reconciliation!

JOSEFFY (*positively*) With Christianity? Not one!

SIDONIE. But this is a different conception of Christianity, dad. It is something new in our experience.

JOSEFFY. Sidonie, you must always be on the lookout for superstition no matter in what guise it presents itself. Otherwise truth becomes guesswork.

SIDONIE. But, daddy, if I feel that my feet are more firmly planted, my outlook more purposeful—?

POLLITZ. Dear child, you have been told by Mrs.

Eddy that Christ represents divinity. You are not in the same category. He is the intermediary, to be finally identified with God in one's thinking. That is Christianity.

SIDONIE. No! No! That is the current Christian's conception of Jesus!

LAEMPFERT (*coldly*) You have simply been told by one sect of Christians that another is wrong; which doesn't mean that either of them is right.

SIDONIE. I have been told that Jesus denied the reality of the material world. To him all that is, is but Divine Mind, which is not material; while all churches which do not believe that, give themselves to materialism.

POLLITZ. Well, there's mighty little consolation in that for us! We come in for the back hand slap of being material, too.

SIDONIE (*once more urgent*) Then don't you see that we must begin to purify Judaism, as a worker in gold refines the metal by getting rid of impurities.

POLLITZ. Sidonie, Sidonie, girl, is that refining influence to fall to the Christian Scientist? Remember!—the net that plays and has played in the waters of Israel for two thousand years may vary in form and designation, but it has only one object!

LAEMPFERT (*stridently*) Judaism has stood all the tests for those two thousand years! It will last yet awhile, thank God!

SIDONIE (*trying not to be afraid*) Dad, you mustn't get far away from me in my search for the truth!

JOSEFFY (*his eyes filling with tears*) Sidonie, perhaps my great concern for you has brought this about. I may have sinned by questioning too contentiously why God should have so afflicted you. I did not question with

Job; I had no bitterness. I did not doubt—that period is long past. Nevertheless I examined the facts as if I dared to be the equal of the Most High. (*He is silent for a moment. Sidonie is about to speak, but refrains.*) In the end I had to concede God's purpose to be inscrutable, He Whose intelligence wills life into countless universes, and to Whom the infinite is but a gesture!

SIDONIE (*with tenderness*) If your great concern meant punishment, what is my getting well?

JOSEFFY (*patiently*) Let me restate my position, Sidonie, for you must see it outlined sharply, no matter what else you see now. I am a Jew with a definite Jewish mission in life. Before God is the God of all peoples, He is in a special sense the God of Israel. His commandments have sanctified us. We are literally a witness to God. Alongside of that fact neither Christian claim nor practice has availed. Christianity itself is now under examination by countless thousands of hitherto unquestioning followers. Christian Science is the last effort to save it from extinction under the stress of modern life.

SIDONIE. You will not let yourself see any distinction!

POLLITZ (*impetuously*) Nor must anyone else who follows our guidance be allowed to see it in the sense in which you mean, Sidonie.

SIDONIE (*with a flash of the eye*) You won't have to guard our people against me, Billy!

POLLITZ (*discomfited*) For heaven's sake, Sid!

(*Mrs. Joseffy comes to Sidonie's side.*)

LAEMPFERT. Just a moment, Rose. Sidonie, I am a

practical man, and I speak as one when I tell you that Christianity cannot be put into practice. It is an utter failure in everyday life. I know it because I have dealings with many non-Jews. As for Christian Science, it is merely a clever concealment of the failure.

SIDONIE. Mr. Charles, if there is a grain of truth in it, and that grain can relieve misery, are we to run away in fear because it is called Christian?

LAEMPFERT. Are you sure that you have exhausted all the explanations that Judaism can offer you? Because it must have the explanation for your getting well.

(*Joseffy, who has been pacing the room, stops in front of Pollitz, and addresses him.*)

JOSEFFY. Shall we say that there is something fundamentally wrong with the way we expound Judaism if a Jewess like Sidonie is not utterly revolted by Christianity, no matter in what form it is presented? To borrow a Christian expression, there should be a very Gethsemane for the Jew who takes this step, an agony beyond all agonies!

SIDONIE (*before Pollitz can answer*) I had my Gethsemane, for nearly eight years. (*With impressive dignity*) Dad, I am not here to confess a sin. Nor do I feel that as a Jewess I am in spiritual danger. (*Standing up*) How can you all look at me, and see me here, almost healed and uplifted, and feel that I am facing any moral risk?

JOSEFFY (*hastily*) My child, you must not doubt our gratitude!

(*Laempfert abruptly gets to his feet, and*

*Sidonie, cowed by his formidable solemnity, sinks back into her seat).*

LAEMPFERT. Ephraim, I have a number of important things to attend to. So if you will excuse me— (*He buttons up his coat*).

JOSEFFY (*uneasily*) I suppose you have to. I was glad you were here. I want to see you again today, if possible.

LAEMPFERT. Come down to the bank this afternoon.

SIDONIE (*courageously*) Mr. Charles, perhaps you may not altogether have felt so, but it has been a wonderful occasion.

LAEMPFERT (*composing himself with a heroic effort—the word he manages to get out almost sticking in his throat*) Wonderful?

SIDONIE. Of course, there was the unexpectedness of everything. I had to go through that, too. It was so the Pharisee felt before Jesus' preaching.

LAEMPFERT (*thrusting out his chin and chest*) Sidonie, I have a daughter nearly of your age, and I am as concerned with your future as if you were my own daughter. When your father came to tell me that you had recovered sufficiently to get about with ease, it was a noteworthy day for me. (*Severely*) I can only say to you: Shut your door against Christianity in any form, shut it with all your strength, and keep it shut! If you make the least concession to it— (*He finishes that thought with an abrupt gesture*). There are hard and fast rules of life which cannot be disregarded, and one of them is to respect the counsels of those who have spent their lives

with you. Let your father be your guide, as he has guided others in his wonderful way!

(As he starts to leave, greatly agitated, Mrs. Joseffy intercepts him).

MRS. JOSEFFY. I do want you to stay for lunch, Charles. This is no way to hurry off.

LAEMPFERT (swallowing hard) I had better go. There were too many of us here, anyway.

POLLITZ. It was just the family circle—practically that.

LAEMPFERT. Yes! Yes! Good bye.

(He goes out, with Mrs. Joseffy in his wake).

SIDONIE (her voice uncertain) He tried so hard to be kind and not to hurt me. His intolerance will pass away.

POLLITZ (ruffled by her dispassionate way of putting this) I would call it loyalty to an idea rather than intolerance.

(He sees that Sidonie is gazing at her father, who sits silent and abstracted, his manner spiritless. Pollitz motions to Sidonie to leave the room with him).

SIDONIE (trying not to sound apologetic) Dad, you must not get wrong impressions. There should be no antagonisms.

JOSEFFY. I was not prepared. (Summoning his affection) But for the time being, you ought to think of nothing except rest and recreation. (Smiling wanly) There can be no antagonism in that.

POLLITZ (briskly) So far, so good!

(He goes to Sidonie, and leaning over, whispers to her. She closes her eyes for a moment, then

*gets to her feet. He helps her to the door, and she makes no effort to speak to her father as she goes out.*

*(Joseffy remains motionless in his seat, and there Pollitz finds him when he shortly returns).*

POLLITZ. Her mother is with her. Remarkable how well she stood the ordeal! By George, it is! I think we took big chances. No harm done! Now we can talk without having to count the syllables of our words.

JOSEFFY (*gloomily*) For the time being we are helpless. Charles Laempfert realized it, the one man I thought could solidly influence her.

POLLITZ. The one-man idea never works out. I think Laempfert was more upset by Sidonie's aggressiveness than by any fear of her health. It seemed to me he chilled the atmosphere a bit. It arises from the way he regards young people.

JOSEFFY (*continuing aloud his silent train of thought*) Yet we dare not lend ourselves to any equivocal position. To think that Sidonie should be wandering around in the temple like a mad woman with a torch, careless of where the sparks fall!

POLLITZ. Then we must not try the stunt of putting out the torch by fanning the flame.

JOSEFFY. We certainly cannot sit down and try to match our wits against hers in this situation. She comes of people who died for their religious convictions. You heard her: she believes she has found something with which Judaism can compromise. This is calamitous!

POLLITZ. I would suggest that she and her mother go to California this winter.

JOSEFFY (*shortly*) To transfer the scene of her self-questioning?

POLLITZ. She is too close to all of us. Opposition only humors her obstinacy.

JOSEFFY (*reluctant to quarrel*) We would be taking big chances by letting her go. Once she is away from us and our influence, we may lose her altogether. You spoke of the effect of a new religious experience on an emotional person. That is why we must keep her near us. In the end we will win. It only requires concerted effort and hard thinking.

POLLITZ. No; we're too high-strung. Better that she went away. It's simpler, if you stop to think of it.

JOSEFFY. That's the counsel of despair.

POLLITZ (*forbearingly*) I wouldn't call it that. Just plain prudence, that's all. I was watching and listening, even though I did most of the talking. If Sidonie stays here, we will end up by damning her logic out aloud. It will be next to impossible to let her continue saying what she thinks. We will lose our tempers. There isn't a lot of time in which to act, you know.

JOSEFFY. And when she is away from us, and is out of reach of our counsel, do you think she will resign herself to indifference? She will guess why we sent her away, and her intuitions will damn us! I must show her that I am honest enough to meet the issue in person.

POLLITZ. Please do not fail to give me, also, credit for honesty in the matter!

JOSEFFY (*surprised at his warmth*) I was speaking for the both of us. It never entered my head to detach you in our common predicament.

POLLITZ (*seizing on this*) Don't you see how it is bound to affect me? Here is the Louisville call, and the responsibilities it implies. My work necessitates that I consider other things than the encroachment of Christian Science on loose Jewish thinking. That's a muddy stream into which one can't wade too deep.

JOSEFFY (*without hesitation*) Undoubtedly! Judaism itself comes first—ahead of me, of you, of Sidonie!

POLLITZ (*after a pause*) Suppose, then, we discard my proposal about her going away. She stays.

JOSEFFY. I am very glad to hear you say so. I was afraid you would insist on it. I simply can't let her go, William! You have insight, but it will be a long time before you quite understand that.

POLLITZ. Then I can count on your affection giving particular point to what I am going to propose instead. There is a way out of this, the only working possibility left us, except that I am afraid you won't entertain the suggestion I want to make. (*As Joseffy waits to be enlightened*) It concerns the most important personage in the whole entanglement.

JOSEFFY (*immediately up in arms*) My answer to that is the fact that I haven't even remotely thought of him in considering Sidonie's future!

POLLITZ. I don't see how you can avoid it. I am no prophet; but whether we like it or not, we will certainly have to go to Sydney Rosenthal.

JOSEFFY. I certainly do not intend to go!

POLLITZ. So you think at this particular moment. But the going is inevitable; and we can do it in one of two ways: either in a spirit of hostility and denunciation; or we carry the olive branch.

JOSEFFY (*angrily*) You take our dignity and tear it to shreds, as if it were a wornout garment! You forget everything that preceded this!

POLLITZ. Everything since Rosenthal left us was merely a prelude to the events of today. Maybe you think I am ready to shout with joy at the prospect of approaching him! Whenever I see the placid face of that renegade Jew in the streets of Pittsburgh, I feel like punching it! (*As Joseffy turns away, shocked by the violence of this*) Oh, I'll admit it isn't the most delicate thing in the world to say; but I'm merely giving voice to what the rest of you are thinking and feeling.

JOSEFFY. If we don't inhibit our hates, then the sword must continue to be the measure of man's stature.

POLLITZ. Exactly! Amen! By all means let's circumvent hate with a little intelligence. If we had done it in the first place, we would have gotten a start on Rosenthal by discussing his Christian Science with Sidonie. As it is, we are left grotesquely suspended in mid-air. And Rosenthal, watching us, pretends not to enjoy the scene.

JOSEFFY (*bitterly*) So you suggest that we descend to his level!

POLLITZ. Not to his level, thank God! Not to the level of the will-less seeker after heavenly bliss, who would see us stripped of Sidonie's affection, and find a metaphysical excuse for it!

JOSEFFY. You are filled with needless apprehension.

POLLITZ. Look back on our interview with Sidonie. Imagine her someone else's daughter, not your own, and you a listener. There's no use riding the horns of our

dilemma with a sanguine air! We've got to take the initiative.

JOSEFFY. And all the while I thought you the most optimistic of men!

POLLITZ. Another instance of how little we understand each other's motives! I was keeping in mind the community, and the necessity of hiding Sidonie's views away from it, if possible. They will become known unless we get to Rosenthal and manoeuvre him out of his control of matters.

JOSEFFY. You would be going as a supplicant, never on equal terms. It would be equivalent to an errand of surrender.

POLLITZ. We are commonsense people in a common-sense world, and Rosenthal lives in that world, no matter how he may conceive of it metaphysically. I have an idea that he has not stopped to consider the complications that were bound to arise from Sidonie's sudden interest in Christian Science. He can't be deliberately seeking trouble. In other words, we have got to go and explain matters to him, for even your wise man has his blind spot of stupidity.

JOSEFFY (*with a violent shake of the head*) I can't do it! It revolts every atom of decency in me! How childish to try it! We've just heard of Sidonie's disloyalty to Judaism, and we literally run to him for help! And what is it that we ask of him? What can we ask of him except that he withdraw all Christian Science influence from about her? What else is there to say, unless we denounce him for having permitted Sidonie to bring her spiritual difficulties to him. No! Our case rests with her, not

with him. Let us not carry our problem out of this house! (*He falls to pacing the room*).

POLLITZ. When Sidonie's father and the man she is to marry walk into Rosenthal's office, everything alters at once! We can ask for a respite for Sidonie, and do it without being weak-kneed. We will tell him that since she cannot stand up under the strain of carrying this at once to some final decision, we want her left alone. I am positive that he hasn't weighed the consequences. Like any religious fanatic, he has built a wall about himself, and we've got to climb the wall, and bring a little reality into his world. We have everything to gain. We don't have to do it with lightning and thunder, nor are we going to put our tongues in our cheeks. I wouldn't wait. There are certain plagues that don't burn themselves out easily.

JOSEFFY (*with an involuntary shiver of disgust, dropping into a seat*) I have never lived to so little purpose as during these last days! They have been an insult and a mockery.

POLLITZ. They will continue to mock us as long as we let the reins lie flabbily in our hands.

JOSEFFY. How can you expect any sort of satisfactory hearing from Rosenthal? His disinterestedness will be equivalent to a rebuff. You will finish by getting very angry, or I will.

POLLITZ. We may be letting our dislike of him color our belief as to how he is going to act. He may be sentimental enough to prove magnanimous. In fact, he may not be sufficiently advanced as a Christian Scientist to be a "bitter-ender." If he does show a tendency to smooth things over, his word may go a long way with

Sidonie. All we want at this particular time is a breathing spell.

JOSEFFY. Have you considered the effect on Sidonie of such a visit on our part?

POLLITZ. Our Sidonie, excellent mind though she has, is a child! She will look upon it as a lofty action on our part. It will heighten her confidence in us; whereas, if we stay and shuffle around, she will get further away from us. Don't you see that under no circumstances must the suggestion come from her that we go and talk it over with her uncle?

JOSEFFY. You may have overlooked one thing: she may expect us to go.

POLLITZ (*taken aback*) Eh? (*Quickly*) No! She hasn't reasoned that far!

JOSEFFY (*miserably*) What may she not be reasoning about? You have heard her speak of a woman preaching in the synagogue. Latent dreams and wishes are coming to the surface. There is so much that we can do for her, and she won't give us the chance!

POLLITZ. She won't, because she is beginning to consider us too material, unless we are resourceful enough to disprove it. She hasn't asked us to go to her uncle—very well!—we will steal a march on her! Don't forget that Bismarck, anti-Catholic though he was, and with all his talk about not compromising with Catholic Rome, and about not going to Canossa—went all the same!

JOSEFFY (*exasperated beyond endurance*) Words! Words! Can't you see how my love for her and my hate for this agency which has beclouded her mind are tearing me to pieces?

POLLITZ. Shall we therefore let Sydney Rosenthal go marching on?

JOSEFFY. We have only had our first talk with Sidonie.

POLLITZ. Another such, a few more Fabian retreats on her part— (*He shrugs his shoulders. Then carefully extinguishing his cigar in an ash tray on the table, he uses his opportunity to look closely at Joseffy*). If you want, we can see Rosenthal today.

JOSEFFY (*curtly*) Please don't talk to Sidonie until I can talk to her myself.

POLLITZ. We may come to an impassé where I will have to go to Rosenthal alone.

JOSEFFY. William, I am too old a man to be bullied into hasty action!

POLLITZ (*now at the door*) There are two communities concerned in the ebb and flow of our fortunes. We are stewards, and a belated accounting of our conduct in this matter may raise a storm.

JOSEFFY. I can only do the honorable thing as I see it.

POLLITZ. We can't replace Sidonie with a text on "Honor." (*He goes out*).

(*Joseffy, suddenly finding himself alone, shakes off his stupor, and gets to his feet. He wanders about the room in anger*).

JOSEFFY. That this should come to me!

(*As he paces the room, the hall door opens and Mrs. Joseffy enters*).

MRS. JOSEFFY. I'm so happy!—you were splendid with Sidonie, Ephraim! Even Charles was tactful. Now

you must keep William confident that everything will turn out all right.

JOSEFFY (*gathering his wide-flung thoughts*) If there had been more honesty, I would not have come into this so late and with so great a handicap. I'm not going to lend myself to anything that will make me a party to still greater dishonesty.

(*The falling curtain shows Joseffy taking his cap and gown from the settle, while his wife, aghast at the hardness of his tone and manner, is at a loss for a reply, and can only look at him in dismay*).

(*Curtain*)

(*A Week Intervenes Between Acts I and II*)

## ACT II

Sydney Rosenthal's private office in his business suite of rooms. Colorless lawbooks run in parallel on open shelves against all walls from floor to ceiling. To the right is a desk loaded with papers, and holding a telephone. It is flanked by straight-backed leather-upholstered chairs that show much wear. A revolving bookcase is within reach of the desk. A costumer stands nearby. Back of these are two windows that look out on the business section of Pittsburgh.

In the rear wall, the bookshelves gape in the middle to allow space for a bronze bust of Lincoln whose curling hair, peaked beard, quizzical look and bare shoulders give him the appearance of a satyr. Above it hangs an etching of the head of Mary Baker Eddy.

Sufficiently removed from the wall on the left to allow access to the books is a leather-covered couch. On that side, in the upper corner, is a door. In coming through it, one confronts a large globe of the world, a brightly colored patch against the expanse of expressionless books.

A dusty-grey chenille carpet completes the picture of severe simplicity which rules throughout the office. Decorative accessories are lacking that would indicate an aesthetic side to Rosenthal.

The time is morning, and the sun streams into the unoccupied room. A tall boy in short trousers comes rolling in with the clumsy gait of overgrown adolescence. He whistles as he moves, throws some letters into a tray on the desk, sends the revolving bookcase whirling as he turns away from the desk, and on the way out rotates the globe. Each time that he opens the door, the beat of typewriters can be heard.

The next visitors are a young man attached to the office, and a pretty, young woman with impressive carriage, and in faultless street attire. She is ill at ease, and is divided between a desire to snub the young man and to keep on friendly terms with him.

Frederick Speiser, who is a senior law clerk, has a very starched and prim look, and shows a mask-like face behind his tortoise-shelled glasses. His talk is declamatory, and when he wishes to emphasize a point, he rises on his toes. If he is not using his hands at such a time, they are firmly clasped behind him.

The young woman's name is Mrs. W. Remington Bar-dell.

MRS. BARDELL (*seating herself rather stiffly in a chair beside the desk*) I cannot understand why you should doubt that I have an appointment with Mr. Rosenthal.

SPEISER (*evidently outraged by a misstatement of fact — frigidly polite*) I did not doubt it. I was merely surprised. I am sorry if I showed it.

MRS. BARDELL (*looking over his head*) I cannot see the difference.

SPEISER (*desperately*) As a matter of fact, since I can surmise the reason for your wishing to see him, I was at a loss to understand the reason for his appointment.

MRS. BARDELL. That sounds very presumptuous. My case may be the talk of all Pittsburgh, but I expected the full protection of this office. If Mr. Rosenthal spoke to you— (*She waits*).

SPEISER (*hastily*) Not at all! Or I would have expected you. I supposed there was some misunderstanding, since he will have nothing more to do with divorce cases. I am sorry.

MRS. BARDELL (*as he is about to go*) I have merely come to Mr. Rosenthal for advice. My lawyers are Henderson and Wallach, but they are perfectly willing that I should also consult Mr. Rosenthal.

SPEISER (*with a little more courage*) It was different when this firm was "Loeb, Rosenthal and Goldfarb."

MRS. BARDELL (*less haughtily*) So Mr. Henderson tells me. It seems to me Mr. Rosenthal's objections to divorce cases should depend on how important they are.

SPEISER. It's all been different of late. (*Rounding his phrases*) Even though I am a beginner, as a member of the bar I regret seeing so great a specialist relinquish part of his practice.

MRS. BARDELL. I can understand his giving up his court work. It must be very disagreeable.

SPEISER (*pleased to be imparting information to the charming visitor*) He will simply have nothing to do with divorce cases at all. It is astonishing! I believe that a lawyer should be like a physician, always ready to respond to every appeal. Mr. Rosenthal has turned his back on work that is his natural bent.

MRS. BARDELL. Surely circumstances make a difference!

SPEISER. None at all. That is what has upset me. Work is part of my religion. (*Risking a rebuff*) I wish I could be of help to you, for I don't think Henderson and Wallach are going to be that. You haven't enough of a case, from what I gathered from the newspapers.

MRS. BARDELL (*throwing herself on his mercy*) Is there anyone in Pittsburgh I could see who has influence with Mr. Rosenthal?

SPEISER (*sorrowfully*) The sort of people who have any influence with him are not at all keen on divorce. They are—if I may characterize it—like cattle: they don't seem to have marital difficulties. That is always the case with people who go to extremes in religion. (*Then he is alarmed at having said too much in criticism of his superior*).

MRS. BARDELL (*shortly*) I have been told about his interest in Christian Science. If I can't use his Christian Science friends to influence him, he surely still has Jewish friends. Not that I know these people! (*Hastily*) You are not a Hebrew?

SPEISER. Oh, no! Not at all! Clever people, you know, and all that! But— (*He makes a deprecatory gesture*). His one-time influential Jewish friends have very little to do with him, except when they get in a hole.

MRS. BARDELL (*quickly*) But if he advises them, why should he object to going over my case with me?

SPEISER. Well, you see, they don't come to him for divorce. It isn't their strong point. Either they're able to cover up a great deal or must be able to stand a great deal.

MRS. BARDELL. When he hears all the facts—

SPEISER. There's nothing new under the sun in divorce. A lot of unhappy people have passed through this room!

MRS. BARDELL (*stubbornly*) I shall be listened to! What sort of a Christian is he if he is going to send me away? You think those people who came here overstated their troubles when they wanted a divorce? (*Flaring up*) You're very young, and can't understand! (*It leaves Speiser very abject, and he makes an ado about wiping his glasses*). How much one overlooks things! (*She turns and stares out of the window, and seems to be speaking to herself*). One tries to be patient, and it is so hateful! Nothing but miserable discord! The whole world seems full of it! I wonder people don't go insane!

(*Sydney Rosenthal has entered in time to hear the closing phrases of her passionate outbreak. He is short, inclined to corpulency, has a large round head whose curly hair is beginning to thin out, is heavily mustached, has a Roman nose and brown eyes which look out shrewdly from under shaggy eyebrows.*)

ROSENTHAL (*after a quick scrutiny of his visitor whose face is in profile, and who has not heard him come in*) No, Mrs. Bardell! (*Both she and Speiser start and turn around*). Not discord! Why do you slip handcuffs over your good nature like that? (*He goes to the costumer and hangs up his overcoat and hat*). I hope you have not been listening to Mr. Speiser here. He glories in our reputation for waxing fat on difficulties.

SPEISER (*with a desperate effort to retrieve his dignity*) I would be sorry if Mrs. Bardell carried away any wrong impression.

ROSENTHAL. I know exactly what's on your mind, my young friend. You are trying to reconcile my having Mrs. Bardell come here with my recent attitude towards good people that have her kind of perplexity. You don't like to think that I have grown utterly untrustworthy. (*He pats Speiser on the shoulder*).

SPEISER (*embarrassed*) If you will excuse me— (*He bows to Mrs. Bardell and makes a very stiff exit*).

MRS. BARDELL (*speaking with suppressed emotion*) It is very kind of you to be willing to see me.

ROSENTHAL (*cordially*) It will depend entirely on you, dear lady, whether your visit will really be worth your while.

MRS. BARDELL. Yes! Yes! There are circumstances you don't know, you can't know!

ROSENTHAL. You can tell me anything you wish—but nothing that will make you unhappy. (*He seats himself behind the desk, and regards her with fatherly interest*).

MRS. BARDELL (*puzzled*) Nothing that will make me unhappy? How can I possibly be more unhappy?

ROSENTHAL. By dragging your troubles into a heartless law court, where they will put your unfortunate situation under a lens and magnify it out of all proportion—as they are doing in the newspapers.

MRS. BARDELL. But all my husband's counter-accusations, and the lies—! Oh, I'm going to be free of him! He is not going to wipe his feet on me!

ROSENTHAL (*gently*) You speak of wanting to be free of him. Will you try to see that you never will be, no matter how many courts declare to the contrary, because you will keep holding up before you a false image of your husband, you will keep stressing the wrong side of him?

MRS. BARDELL. Am I, then, responsible for his—his—schemes that make it appear that I am as bad as he is? He never could be decent! I was only deceiving myself, like most girls who think they have married their ideal. He may fight back like the beast he is, but I shall get my divorce!

ROSENTHAL. Mrs. Bardell, the person you hate is coined by you, as certainly as a coiner takes metal, and stamping an image upon it, makes the coin the measure of value.

MRS. BARDELL (*clasping her two hands tightly for self-control*) I have had to live with all of him, his bad nature as well as his good!

ROSENTHAL. Can you try for one hour not to be concerned with what he thinks of you? Then your own hatred will not blind you, and you may see a better way than you have taken.

MRS. BARDELL (*her jaws set*) If I let go now, he will think that I am afraid!

ROSENTHAL. And is this the way of courage?

MRS. BARDELL. I want justice!

(*There is a pause*).

ROSENTHAL. In these matters there is a person whom I know that can be of greater help to you than I.

MRS. BARDELL (*overjoyed*) Yes?

ROSENTHAL. This person has a knowledge that heals all hurts.

MRS. BARDELL (*staring*) I don't understand you.

ROSENTHAL. She is a Christian Science practitioner.

MRS. BARDELL (*as if he had perpetrated some cruel joke*) How can you! (*With difficulty restraining her indignation*) You can't know what has been going on!

ROSENTHAL. So much do I know after my long years of law practice, that I prefer to turn you over to God instead of to a loveless law court and to lifeless legal quibbling that will only gibe at your helplessness.

MRS. BARDELL. But surely, you don't say that to everyone who comes here!

ROSENTHAL. To you because your position seems more difficult. Others are not so fortunate. So they sacrifice themselves to man's machinery for grinding out justice. (*His voice a little higher*) You think that I am evasive when I counsel you to seek God in your heart. "They who live by the sword, shall die by the sword!" That's practical commonsense. Mrs. Bardell, I'm more and more ashamed to have been a party to so much strife in the past!

MRS. BARDELL (*dully*) That doesn't help me who have gone so far and must see it through. We need your skill not to make it worse.

ROSENTHAL. No, it is rather my adroitness that you seek. How can that achieve honest ends?

MRS. BARDELL (*at the end of her patience*) There is right, and there is wrong; and my happiness comes first!

ROSENTHAL. We differ as to how you can best get that happiness.

MRS. BARDELL. I believe that the law will give it to me.

ROSENTHAL. By that you mean man-made law. There is a greater law that has proved capable of taking care of every situation, of every unhappiness. The moment you grasp the fact that you are an expression of that law, the discord will pass out of your life as the darkness gives way to the dawn. At once that discord will also cease in those who now appear to be disturbing you.

MRS. BARDELL. You mean that my husband should go unpunished?

ROSENTHAL. Punishment is only a confession of weakness on the part of those who judge and those who carry out the judgment.

MRS. BARDELL (*getting up*) I can't see it! It only confuses me. I mustn't forget what a conspiracy they are trying to work up against me! If I listen to you, I will begin to think that it is I who have done wrong. Why, that is horrible! (*She becomes calmer*). My attorneys told me that you were not interested in divorce cases any longer, but everybody said that I ought to have a talk with you. Mr. Henderson was willing for me to do it, as I have been so upset, and they seemed so slow.

ROSENTHAL (*gently*) I know. And I have considered your case at greater length than you can be aware of, since they have spoken to me. (*Getting to his feet*) As it is, I have done better than you expected of me.

MRS. BARDELL (*shaking her head*) What you say might have meant a great deal to me at one time. Now something is dead in me. That man killed it!

ROSENTHAL. My dear friend, there was a Nazarene

who raised the dead—because he knew that death was a self-imposed illusion.

(*Mrs. Bardell goes to the door, and stands there in debate, as if wondering how to make a last bid for the assistance she wants. Then she hastily dabs her eyes, and without another word goes out. The telephone on Rosenthal's desk rings, but he, greatly moved, does not at once answer it. Finally he goes to it and lifts the receiver.*)

ROSENTHAL. Hello! . . . Yes. . . . Is anyone with him? . . . Send him in. . . .

(*His face momentarily clouds as he awaits the caller. It is Pollitz who enters, solemn in mien. His nervousness makes his walk a strut. He has difficulty with his excess of dignity.*)

ROSENTHAL (*who has come forward with manifest cordiality*) How do you do, Mr. Pollitz?

POLLITZ. Thank you, all right. How are you? (*They shake hands. Pollitz speaks slowly*) I hope that I am not in the way in breaking in on you without an appointment.

ROSENTHAL. You're entirely welcome! Make yourself as much at home as a place like this will permit. (*He remains on his feet while Pollitz takes a seat beside the desk.*)

POLLITZ (*extending a cigar*) Will you join me?

ROSENTHAL. I'm not smoking, thank you. You go ahead—everybody else usually does here.

POLLITZ (*trying to be at ease*) Some of the women who come here I suppose are inclined to. You used to be a heavy smoker yourself, I remember.

ROSENTHAL (*simply*) I went to get some help from a Christian Science practitioner in a business matter, and I came away with my appetite for tobacco gone. Sounds odd, I know. (*As Pollitz while lighting his cigar glances around to escape meeting his eye, so as to avoid comment on this recital*) I don't think the place has changed much since your last visit. There are some new books on the shelves. As you know, prodigious information is required to secure justice in this world. (*His unaffected laugh helps still further to put Pollitz at his ease*).

POLLITZ. I came near going into law myself last year. I got to the point where the need for recognition for what I was trying to do began to trouble me. One wants to expand, you know. The Louisville call disposes of that, thank heaven! You may have heard of it from Sidonie. And the papers made such a ridiculous ado about it.

ROSENTHAL. I know several ministers who went into the practice of law. A man who would succeed in the one profession ought to succeed in the other.

POLLITZ (*laughing*) Just a matter of getting your precedents right, eh?—with Blackstone instead of Moses. (*Warmly*) I feel, Mr. Rosenthal, that we are going to understand each other. I was a little uneasy we might not. Although after all, why shouldn't we? We are practical men. I begin to think that the other kind is a harmful species. I suppose you meet that kind often among your clients.

ROSENTHAL. They form the majority of my visitors.

POLLITZ (*with a display of hesitation*) Perhaps you have one before you right now, if his errand is any criterion!

ROSENTHAL. Suppose we say right off that you come with the best intentions in the world.

POLLITZ. Well, you wouldn't go very far astray. I have felt all along, Mr. Rosenthal, that you would always be willing to lend a hand. I am inclined to take the right kind of thing for granted.

ROSENTHAL. The universe waits at the fearless man's door to do his bidding.

POLLITZ (*with a wave of his cigar*) Of course, you know what I have in mind. As far as I'm concerned, I'm willing to efface myself if only when Sidonie and her father come here they will come to some amicable understanding.

ROSENTHAL. With each other, or with me?

POLLITZ. With each other. You see I am plain spoken.

ROSENTHAL. It saves a lot of explanation in the end.

POLLITZ. Yet candor has not been the method of those two remarkable people, the father and daughter. I say it in all loyalty. Instead of Dr. Joseffy coming here days ago to have a talk with you, the prompting at this late hour comes from Sidonie who sees under what a strain he has been living. And they come as irreconcilables. (*After a pause*) Have you any definite idea what is bringing them?

ROSENTHAL (*slowly*) I only know that Dr. Joseffy left word with my secretary that he would be here at eleven o'clock unless he heard to the contrary from me. Until you told me, I did not expect Sidonie to be with him.

POLLITZ. It becomes our plain duty to protect her in the general mêlée. Of course, I don't say that Dr. Joseffy

will not be considerate. He is not going to force any issue. But when the showdown comes, you can't expect him to be just a plain spectator.

ROSENTHAL (*the lightness gone out of his tone, and anxiety taking its place*) There is no issue to be forced.

POLLITZ. Sidonie believes otherwise. In that she merely reflects the profound disturbance in her father's mind.

ROSENTHAL (*positively*) Greater difficulties have been overcome, much greater.

POLLITZ. Well, I'll take my hat off to anyone who can, for one thing, satisfy Dr. Joseffy that Sidonie is not the victim of a peculiar combination of circumstances!

ROSENTHAL. He is making his own problem. If you wish to use the word "victim," he is his own victim.

POLLITZ (*troubled*) If we adopt that attitude, consider the chances for further embroilment.

ROSENTHAL. I refuse to consider them, Mr. Pollitz. We do not go about in the world constantly calling out in warning to ourselves. We are meant for better things than that.

POLLITZ. Joseffy may insist that some decision be reached here.

ROSENTHAL (*shortly*) Why should decisions be reached?

POLLITZ. Because the influence of them may be momentous for the Jew in America.

(*Rosenthal does not speak at once. He eyes the young man before him as he weighs what he has just said*).

ROSENTHAL. Is Sidonie interested in whether it may be momentous for the American Jew?

POLLITZ (*at once*) She is! And there you have the crux of the whole situation! (*Surprised*) You mean to say you don't know that she considers it possible to reconcile Judaism and Christian Science?

ROSENTHAL (*after a pause*) She would seem to be a little bewildered. It will pass away.

POLLITZ. So Joseffy feels, too; but not for your reasons. You have got to consider that you may be asked either to agree that the religious reconciliation is possible, or to tell her right out that she is wrong. Putting her off won't work. And she hasn't enough strength yet to stand much buffeting, you know.

ROSENTHAL (*as the other waits*) I am no conjurer to shake a method out of my sleeve, on short notice, for sending Dr. Joseffy away happy.

POLLITZ. Then you certainly won't send Sidonie away happy! After all, Mr. Rosenthal, you and Joseffy have one important thing in common that ought to bring a measure of peace for the time being. All we need is a respite.

ROSENTHAL (*not so friendly*) What is it we have in common?

POLLITZ (*dramatically*) Your love for Sidonie!

(*Rosenthal goes to the window and looks out. He speaks without turning*).

ROSENTHAL. Our respective affections for that child are exactly what appear to have created the difficulty. (*Pollitz is about to speak, but thinks better of it*). You are certain that Sidonie has been trying to reconcile her ideas on Christian Science and Judaism?

POLLITZ. I am surprised that she has said nothing to you about it.

ROSENTHAL (*turning to him brusquely*) I do not discuss Christian Science with Sidonie.

POLLITZ. Then the practitioner to whom she goes.

ROSENTHAL. I do not know what Sidonie says to Mrs. Perkins.

POLLITZ. Then the likelihood is that Sidonie doesn't tell her all her doubts. She should have brought them to you. (*Feeling the lack of sympathy in the other man's manner*) Mr. Rosenthal, you can ease the tension by satisfying her on one fact—that Christian Science and Judaism after all hold in common the belief in one God and that neither is idolatrous. That doesn't mean reconciling the creeds, but it will help.

ROSENTHAL. My dear rabbi, the God of Christian Science and the God of Judaism are not identical. They represent opposite poles of thought.

POLLITZ (*his tone argumentative*) God rules your world as well as mine.

ROSENTHAL. Mr. Pollitz, when I was a Jew, I could never demonstrate the God I believed in. I had constantly to take him on faith. In Christian Science I am making my demonstration day by day. (*Less and less conciliatory*) Have you stopped to consider how much the conception of God varies from one Jewish pulpit to the other, even as it varies from one Christian sect to the other?

POLLITZ (*trying not to appear ruffled*) At one time—and you certainly were as hard-headed a thinker as you are today—you believed differently, and just as sincerely. It satisfied you then. Well, there can't be such an

awful side to Judaism that you can't tell Sidonie today to wait yet awhile before she makes a final decision.

ROSENTHAL. When people begin questioning a religion to which they have clung for years you cannot trifle with them.

POLLITZ. Don't you see that is exactly what Joseffy is saying? If you insist on backing Sidonie's groping for metaphysical truths in front of him—! Come let us be more lenient! (*He ventures a broad, friendly smile*).

ROSENTHAL. But you seem to overlook that Sidonie's groping, as you call it, involves her well-being.

POLLITZ. She wants more than to get well.

ROSENTHAL. Precisely—else we wouldn't be discussing her.

POLLITZ (*watching the effect of his words*) Suppose that to Dr. Joseffy all this is but the endeavor to one end—to convert Jews?

ROSENTHAL (*sharply*) Christian Scientists are not interested in conversions.

POLLITZ (*ready to relinquish this dangerous ground*) Then you have that, too, in common with us. The Jew believes that the world will come to accept his ideas because of the exemplary spiritual life he tries to lead.

ROSENTHAL. I have long had another explanation for the Jew's refusal to make converts.

POLLITZ. You sound as if it were not as flattering as mine.

ROSENTHAL. I'm afraid not. I feel sure that Israel did not make any attempt to bring others into the fold because of a sense of superiority which refused other races equal footing. When the Scientist, on the other hand, does not urge "Be one with us!" it is because truth

is something that comes when one is ready—never before.

POLLITZ. If Sidonie seems to you to be ready for the truth, Dr. Joseffy certainly is not. And he will not brook any undervaluation of Judaism in the presence of Sidonie. The solution, as I see it, is to give her some explanation that will satisfy her that she can hold her status as a Jewess, while from Christian Science literature she will continue to derive the optimism which has helped her. I feel that Joseffy will have to be contented with that much.

ROSENTHAL (*stiffly*) One of the things about deception is that it inevitably digs the pitfall for the deceiver. I would be lying if I said that Sidonie could be in the synagogue and in Christian Science at the same time.

POLLITZ (*insistently*) Come! Come! You must allow that there are certain spiritual truths which transcend creed and dogma!

ROSENTHAL. There are. That is what we declare in Science.

POLLITZ. Mr. Rosenthal, I for one, am so little ridden by petty prejudices that I have even counted on this new zeal and interest to lend color to Sidonie's Judaism. That may sound selfish; but I've got my life to think of, you know.

ROSENTHAL. If Sidonie can find reconciliation between these two diametrically opposed religious tenets without pressure from anyone, then that settles it. But the first essential is that she be left alone. I had come to expect that in the Joseffy household, fumbling, stumbling, mortal mind would be penetrated by the light of forbearance. Instead, within a few minutes there is the chance that in this office I will be threatened with

acrimonious debate. That debate, sir, will spring from intolerance. Think of it—a Jew intolerant of a new idea!

POLLITZ. I should think that the way out is not very hard if you will take it upon yourself to bring the necessary tolerance. You have been terribly misunderstood, Mr. Rosenthal! It has been a blind, unkind misunderstanding. Despite that, the Jews in Pittsburgh can grasp the magnanimity of self-abnegation, that supreme position of Jesus as epitomized in the Sermon on the Mount. If they saw you send Sidonie back to the synagogue, the hostility of the Jewish community towards you would disappear. That would not require any sacrifice of spiritual values. On the contrary, you would be seen in the right light. Our need is the cessation of strife, Mr. Rosenthal. Help us in that!

ROSENTHAL (*dryly*) My friend, there is an account—at which you may have smiled—of a certain gentleman who is hardly regarded as a benevolent advisor, who took a good person to the top of a mountain and showed him the whole world, in all the magnificence of its material glamor. He offered him that material world for an apparently trifling return. Ah, Mr. Pollitz, you will have to offer me something less questionable than Pittsburgh's good opinion! Sidonie's well-being is worth it!

POLLITZ (*rising angrily*) What do you expect me to do?—acquiesce in her rejection of things she and I have held dear?

ROSENTHAL. To my way of thinking, we had better let matters take their course.

POLLITZ. Of course you will say that! That's some of your metaphysics!—to watch how far one can get into

the machinery without being badly mangled! Something has got to be done! She has no business to come here with her father! You yourself looked worried when I told you what her errand was!

ROSENTHAL. In your present state of excitement, it were perhaps better, Mr. Pollitz, that you were not here when they came. I say it in all kindness.

POLLITZ. I'm just the one who ought to be here!

ROSENTHAL. There is the telephone. You want to ask them not to come? They may not have left the house.

POLLITZ (*wrathfully*) How can I explain my sudden fear over the telephone?

ROSENTHAL (*not in a spirit of vindictiveness*) Is it because you have been too positive about winning me over, and find it is too late to warn Joseffy about me?

POLLITZ. Have it as you want. You have brought me to a sharper realization of what I owe Judaism than all of Dr. Joseffy's arguments. At the same time I do not intend to lose my head the way he has. I certainly will not telephone Sidonie. That will be merely playing into the hands of you people.

ROSENTHAL (*quietly*) Just a suggestion on my part. Or you might wait for her outside and keep her from coming in.

POLLITZ (*fuming*) Cheap stuff again, in which I will be at a disadvantage! And you know it. I am going to take a taxicab and go to the house. If I can catch Sidonie there and hold up her visit, all right. If she persists in coming here despite that, that's her affair. If I miss her and she comes here, well, we've been made fools of anyway!

ROSENTHAL (*sorry for him*) I am certain that whatever you do, will prove the right thing.

POLLITZ (*making no effort now to hide his dislike of the other man*) We're in a bad way, and you know it! —and you don't care how much deeper we get into it!

(*He hurries from the room. The telephone rings again, as if his exit were a signal to the person who rules over the office routine*).

ROSENTHAL (*trying to shake off sudden dejection—speaking into the receiver*) Yes! . . . Please send him in.

(*He is able to smile when he opens the door expectantly*).

ROSENTHAL. Come right along, Perkins! (*The man addressed comes in*). I've had several surprises today, and you're not the least of them.

(*All that this elicits from the visitor as he shakes hands is a grunt. George Perkins is typical in appearance of many men to be found in the business highways of American cities. He is blonde, fleshy, his hair, which is thin and yellow, is parted to a nicety in the middle, there is wariness in the smooth-shaven, round face, but the lower heavy jaw is at odds with his boyish blue eyes. He would be ashamed to be considered sentimental, but is ready to be highly emotional over things that are proper public subjects for emotion. In the presence of people who do not "stick to the point" he is prone to be silent*).

ROSENTHAL. Come to think of it, I can't say that you look jovial.

PERKINS (*trying to be responsively pleasant*) Oh, I can be happy, all right! How are you?

ROSENTHAL (*unable to resist laughing at him*) Oh, I'm happy, too! Have a seat.

PERKINS. Do you mind if I stand?

ROSENTHAL. Not at all! You look capable enough!

PERKINS. Truth is, I'm too mad to be sitting around even though some people act as if my fighting days were over. (*He takes out a cigar and proceeds to light it*).

ROSENTHAL. Sounds like a case of assault and battery. But then you don't have to come to me when you have "Foster & Barrett" to look after your interests. Evidently you are here for something less expensive.

PERKINS (*sulkily*) I don't know that it'll do any good telling you. If you don't mind, Mrs. Perkins is not to know that I came to see you. She'd say that she could take care of my troubles, and you oughtn't to be bothered with them. That comes of being a healer's husband. Something like being a minister's wife.

ROSENTHAL. It happens that a little while ago I was trying to send a lady to Mrs. Perkins who came to consult me. I couldn't handle her case.

(*Perkins looks at him wonderingly, certainly without admiration for the admission. But since he concedes Rosenthal's ability, he brushes the latter's remark aside as springing from a religious impulse*).

PERKINS. You know what you're doing, I guess. Perhaps you can tell me what other people are trying to do. There's been a mighty funny game going on these last few days. It's the Hebrew crowd. They're trying to

get me. I didn't want to bother you, but you understand them better than I do.

ROSENTHAL (*surprised*) What are you talking about? (*Immediately becoming the lawyer in the face of an unexpected situation*) Why should they want to do anything to you? You've made money for them.

PERKINS (*at the apex of wonder*) That's what's got me! I can make a lot more for them! I'm one of their best little friends, take it from me!

ROSENTHAL (*good humoredly*) I don't suppose you dreamed this. And seeing that you haven't any prejudices when it comes to making money—not even racial ones—you arouse my curiosity.

PERKINS. It's the Hebrews, though! Laempfert, who was ready to go the limit with me on the Washington Block property, has laid down cold, now that I've put pretty nearly everything I could spare or borrow into it.

ROSENTHAL. What did you do when you found out?

PERKINS (*sourly*) I've been going around hunting up money. It's not easy. Wallenstein, who was dead anxious last month to be in on this with me—you know, I turned him down because Laempfert was going to let me have money on better terms—well, Wallenstein said he was too busy to see me. So did Raphael Mandel.

ROSENTHAL. All is not necessarily Jewish that is gold. How did the non-Jewish crowd treat you?

PERKINS. I'm cold with the Second National Bank, but I thought I'd see Hopkins anyway.

ROSENTHAL. Sure. Any port in a storm!

PERKINS. Same here. The devil if need be! Hop-

kins was pleasant, too damned much so! He can turn you down more ways than you can shake a stick at, and do it as if he was your own father. Anyway, I got him talking, and when he quit beating around the bush, he said he had heard some of the Laempfert crowd talk about leaving me alone because I was overdoing it. You may bet that was spilled for his benefit! Any advice those people give in public isn't given away for nothing! It did the trick, all right, for Hopkins can't figure me and them being on the outs.

ROSENTHAL. You're sure Laempfert knows how deeply you're in?

PERKINS. You can't keep anything from your banker. You couldn't bluff Laempfert, anyway.

ROSENTHAL (*slowly*) It may be caution on his part, Perkins, nothing more. He may have been going in too deep himself, and is trying retrenchment. How did he act when you saw him?

PERKINS, That's it! (*He extends his cigar with a stiff gesture, and his face screws itself up in indignation*). Just looked over my head! He never did that before. It made me mad all over, although I didn't let on. If I'd 'a spoken my mind, it would have raised a row, and the wife would have found out. She'd want to take care of it metaphysically. Why, he didn't even try to give me a decent excuse, except that he needed the money!

ROSENTHAL. I'll admit it doesn't sound like him.

PERKINS (*with a snort*) He tried that sort of game before, but I had the upper hand, and he ate crow.

ROSENTHAL. When was that?

PERKINS (*clumsily*) Sorry I mentioned it. The wife

didn't want me ever to speak of it to you—or to anyone else, for that matter.

ROSENTHAL. Then it must have been when I left the synagogue.

PERKINS (*chuckling at the memory*) I made Laempfert look like thirty cents, and he had to pretend there was no hard feeling about it. He made a bluff of calling in his loans on me, but I had some folks ready to catch me when he let go, and his good money might have got lost in the shuffle. He must have owed you a grudge, all right!

ROSENTHAL (*after a pause*) Perkins, I'm sorry. I can hardly believe that human beings are given to running on all fours like that.

PERKINS. As for me, I think it's kind of foolish to mix sentiment and business. You might as well let the women boss the job.

ROSENTHAL. I suppose you've been doing some hard thinking. What's Laempfert putting the screws on you for?

PERKINS. I can only guess. I think, between you and me, they're scared about Miss Joseffy coming to see the wife. Eh?

ROSENTHAL (*wincing*) It seems pretty far-fetched.

PERKINS. No wish to argue, but I kind of feel that it might be as good a reason as any. Something like that is bound to upset you people when it happens. Remember the lot of fuss they made about you jumping the synagogue?

ROSENTHAL. I can't think of Laempfert going out of his way to apply that kind of pressure where, after all, it won't do any good!

PERKINS. Yes, him! (*With a shrug of the shoulders*) I give it up. They're a bunch, all right!

ROSENTHAL (*impatiently*) Perkins, you're beating the air when you try to discuss my people. It can't be expected, of course, that you would be perfectly enlightened on that score. It's a sort of universal ignorance. (*Perkins stolidly puffs away at his cigar*). If what you surmise is so, Laempfert and the other folks are the prey of anxiety. That's one evidence of the inherent weakness of their religion, my friend. They are in mortal fear that they will lose this skirmish in the fight they have been waging for several thousand years to keep the race spiritually a unit. That's their most sensitive point. Since you haven't any religion, Perkins,—I know you don't mind my saying so—why, you can't understand them at all. Laempfert wouldn't act so stupidly unless he was badly worried. That ought to give you an idea of how intensely he feels himself a Jew!

PERKINS. That doesn't make me any more enthusiastic about them, when they're after breaking my back. I'm in no position to fight them to a finish, and they're wise to the fact. What gets me is, what the devil does Laempfert expect me to do about the rabbi's daughter? He must be thinking things I don't even dream about!

ROSENTHAL. Knowing would hardly help you.

PERKINS. Well, I'm anxious to know. I don't warm to a thump in the dark. (*Quickly*) But you'd better be careful you don't make it worse by trying to get some help for me. Just think it over. There are more ways of killing a cat than by choking it with butter. I don't want to be showing my hand yet, particularly with the bum cards I'm holding. Of course, you can get at them

through their priest. (*As Rosenthal cannot restrain a smile*) You don't call him a priest, do you? He hasn't anything to do with it, has he?

ROSENTHAL (*the smile disappearing—speaking sharply*) No! Of course not! He would be the first one to condemn such an exhibition of childishness! Don't get led away by the same sort of irresponsible thinking that's driving Laempfert into absurdities!

PERKINS. Then Dr. Joseffy isn't our man!

ROSENTHAL (*staring*) Our man! Oh! No! And he mustn't be! Those aren't the lines on which he would fight us or we fight him.

PERKINS. What's the use of being a good sport with them? They'll keep after me long enough to get me.

ROSENTHAL. Judaism is bigger than that, big enough for the world as men accept that world today. However, as you didn't really come to find fault with my former friends, we'll put them out of the reckoning. First of all, let's clear the atmosphere of bad feeling. Then your problem will be taken care of in a surprisingly easy way.

PERKINS. Think you can get around those people with kindness?

ROSENTHAL. We could. But there are other ways of accomplishing our object.

PERKINS (*unenthusiastically*) I don't believe in miracles.

ROSENTHAL. Then we will call it a demonstration.

PERKINS (*interested now*) All right! You can't work them on me too often!

ROSENTHAL.. I won't keep you in suspense. The

demonstration has already been made. Enough money has been found for you to go on with.

PERKINS (*a little quicker in speech*) I don't say that it's a bad risk. It'll make money, hand over fist! (*His eagerness fades out as he is seized with a sudden suspicion*). You understand, I don't want any of your money! I haven't come for that, you know!

ROSENTHAL: What difference does it make whether you came for my money or someone else's? Why shouldn't you use mine?

PERKINS (*stubbornly*) No, that's not what I've come for.

ROSENTHAL. Why not consider yourself lucky that you don't have to go further? As far as this transaction is concerned, it is a matter strictly between ourselves. I don't want to make any money by it, either. I am simply going to put at your disposal enough collateral for you to go out and borrow what you want—or I can borrow it for you, which would be more convenient for you, I suppose:

PERKINS. You would only be selling some of your holdings to get enough cash. There's no use putting yourself out like that because you're sore about Laempfert.

ROSENTHAL (*patiently*) Perkins, I want you to get the idea out of your head that I am actuated by either anger or malice. What I am proposing is the most comfortable method for getting out of this for everybody concerned. I can do it with an easy mind because I am on the eve of rearranging my business plans. (*Perkins, busy digesting the turn of the tide in his fortunes, listens politely*). I am going to give up the practice of law. Most of the

money I can secure by converting my holdings will go where it can do the most good—into work that will helpfully influence the lives of others.

PERKINS (*feeling that it is incumbent upon him to say something*) Is that so?

ROSENTHAL (*smiling*) I may as well start off by influencing the life of a man called Perkins.

PERKINS (*puzzled, but heaving an unrestrained sigh of relief*) Thanks. I get you. Well, it's all right.

ROSENTHAL. I'm glad you feel that way. As for Laempfert and Mandel and the others, they'll be on your side again presently, and resentment is only the buttered side down in business.

PERKINS. Anything you say goes!

(*The telephone bell rings. Rosenthal turns to it.*)

ROSENTHAL Just a moment, Perkins. (*Answers the call*) Hello! . . Who? . . Alone? . . Please make her as comfortable as you can, Miss Jerome. I'll see her right away. (*Hangs up the receiver*). It's my niece, Perkins. She's a wonderful child!

PERKINS. Oh! Sure! I saw the man she's going to marry when I was coming in. (*With some admiration*) He's a little real estate sharp, that fellow, although he hasn't got enough to play with.

ROSENTHAL. It's the trading spirit in the Jew, Perkins. We can't get rid of age-long habits like that, and we shouldn't, unless they become an end in themselves. In Pollitz's case, we've got to see behind the real estate sharp, the Pollitz of higher moments, when God sheds

light into his soul, and his exaltation does him full justice!

PERKINS (*unwillingly giving voice to a little surge of feeling*) You're a queer lot! (*Back to business*) When do you want me to come in to go over things?

ROSENTHAL. This afternoon. Make it three o'clock. I'll be free, and can give you all the time you need. Bring all your papers.

(*Perkins is ready to go; but he makes a strenuous effort to explain a difficulty*).

PERKINS. I'm a black sheep, I suppose. But I'm damned if I can see how a business man can toe the mark about religion. I sure am the despair of the wife! She's a woman—as good as they make them anywhere—

(*His apologia has trailed off into a mumble. Rosenthal tries to bridge the gap*).

ROSENTHAL. Perkins, if you put the same effort and positiveness into believing that you do into doubting, you would get more fun out of business. Had there been a lot of this doubt around at the creation, we wouldn't be here.

PERKINS (*shaking his head at the door before him as if to call it to witness the unfathomable depths*) You beat the wife! See you later.

(*When he goes out, Rosenthal, who is behind him, stands waiting smilingly for Sidonie. She comes quickly into the room, and Rosenthal shuts the door, and with his back to it, regards her with an expression of utter contentment*).

ROSENTHAL (*as she stands hesitating, before him*) Where can I place you to make you most comfortable?

Yet I want you to sit up, to show off all that vigor—we've got to express our gratitude! There, in my seat, between the windows!

(*And kissing her, he leads her to it; then beams down at her.*)

SIDONIE (*her eyes brimming with tears*) You're so glad! (*She reaches out her hand, and he takes it and pats it.*)

ROSENTHAL. With the right measure of gladness—not so hilarious that I will run any risk of losing my dignity! Don't you see that for me you are the living proof that my ship was right in coming into this harbor of divine Principle, after my so many years of existence as a veritable Flying Dutchman! (*Laughs*) I suppose I never looked the part, eh?

SIDONIE (*anxiously*) You must keep on believing in the demonstration.

ROSENTHAL. Belief is the clock by which I live my hours. (*Dusting the table with his handkerchief*) It's a dirty place. That's symbolic, my dear, of the dust that dwells in those books. Come now!—relax! These crisp autumn days—they're yours to command. I, your uncle, say so, having had leisure this year to note their coming. Take dull care by the ear for being a bore and thrust it out of doors. And remember—(*tapping the desk with an authoritative finger*)—you're being cared for as far as you are willing to be cared for! (*Lightly, as if it were the most natural thing in the world*) I'm glad you came ahead of your father.

SIDONIE. Uncle Sydney, I simply had to come!—

ROSENTHAL. All right! We'll get around to that in

good time. Meanwhile, let's make this compromise about our conversation—I'll do most of it. It's all "in the day's work" for me. That's a joke, my dear. (*More seriously*) It happens that I've got so much to say to you before your father comes, that it's nothing short of a demonstration that you are here!

SIDONIE. Dad won't be long.

ROSENTHAL. He will come not a moment too soon, nor a moment too late. Meanwhile I shall tell you some news. (*His manner quiets her, and she sits back restfully*). I am going to give up my law practice, my dear.

SIDONIE (*simply*) How will you find anything else that can interest you so much?

ROSENTHAL. "Man lives not by bread alone." (*He sits down opposite her, his hands clasped on the desk*). There has been altogether too much respect for me as a man who can charge fat fees.

SIDONIE. Oh, no! You've always given freely.

ROSENTHAL. What a worldly man gives away is never of spiritual consequence. Now I intend to get rid of the bulk of my property. Usually (*and he laughs*) such a thing is looked upon as a sign of feeble-mindedness. It seems to be a measure of strong-mindedness to hold on to as much as possible.

SIDONIE. Somehow, I can't think of you as out of the law practice.

ROSENTHAL. Ah, my dear, you have idealized law through such phantoms as Shakespeare's Portia. The glamor about a law court is like the glamor of most things with which we have but a passing acquaintance. I want you to think of me as being freely able to do lots of other things. Now, if you say that you will do that

—because it will help— (*He waits for her acquiescence*).

SIDONIE. Yes, uncle.

ROSENTHAL. —Then I want to tell you that I would like to put in trust for you an amount of money which will provide a satisfactory income for you.

SIDONIE (*startled*) No, uncle!

ROSENTHAL (*surprised*) Yes, uncle! Come, why not?

SIDONIE. I don't think dad would like it. (*Hastily*) Not because it comes from you. (*Then she catches herself up*) No, that's not honest for me to say, because he would object to it coming from you.

ROSENTHAL. My dear child, let us be practical, even if for the time being we have to ignore the opinions of those we love. Remember, unless we are perfect Scientists—and we are far from that—we must live in a world of business dealings that control our comfort at every point. If you are not in a position to dictate, at least in part, the terms of your business relations, you have no more freedom than the indentured classes who were the slaves of our Revolutionary period. Money gives you the right to vote "yes" or "no" on all questions that affect you. When the doubts you have about yourself are cleared up, and you will know that you are in perfect health, the need for material protection will be less acute. Right now you have got to plan. The dream world you have seen between the bars of your illness is a realizable world. And if I am not in Pittsburgh—

SIDONIE (*alarmed*) You aren't thinking of going away!

ROSENTHAL. I have been thinking of going to Boston—not because as a Scientist I have to go to Boston, or will get anything there that I couldn't get here,—but to

spend some months near the Mother Church, in the company of good people I will meet there.

SIDONIE (*trying not to show her regret at the prospect of losing him*) It isn't the criticism here, is it?

ROSENTHAL. An attorney run away from criticism? (*Noticing her depression*) I won't be away long. And when I have cleared up my own thoughts, I will be in a better position to help you with yours.

SIDONIE (*shaken*) Don't go away yet!—unless everything turns out well today. Don't go away!

ROSENTHAL (*hastily*) No, not right away. (*He puts his hand on hers*). But there's no reason why we shouldn't make plenty of headway today.

SIDONIE (*pleading*) You can't know how dreadfully unhappy dad is. I have been looking for ways to make him patient with me.

ROSENTHAL. I suppose your father was bound to take this much harder than he did my going over to Christian Science; except that now it is more than his pride that is hurt. (*With a slow shake of the head*) If only he weren't a minister!

SIDONIE (*in wonder*) But isn't that just why in the end he is going to find it easier to understand my need?

ROSENTHAL. I am not an unsympathetic brute who turns down his thumb and enjoys watching the scene, my dear child. I can very well appreciate how from the worldly standpoint, the situation is a serious one for your father, practically as serious for him as it is for you. His kind of life is at stake, for his vocation is his life.

SIDONIE. Ah, I know! I know!

ROSENTHAL (*immediately*) Having said that, I have

said everything for him. For you, there is your life—with its search for the great heights of truth, that will, for one thing, liberate your father, too. I am serious when I say that a minister's mind frequently gets to be a circular track, very wearisome to him, too, after his many, many rounds. If your hand is to be eternally gripped in that sort of a race—!

SIDONIE. No, you mustn't see it that way! Perhaps he and I will walk together in common understanding, after all. That is what his presence here should mean! Else why did I get him to come, after everything that has taken place?

ROSENTHAL (*gently*) Exactly why, child, did you get your father to come here?

SIDONIE. Because I think, uncle, that Judaism and Christian Science can find much in common to bring peace to those in Israel who are harrassed by sickness or sin or the fear of death.

ROSENTHAL. And if they don't want to be free of sin, sickness and death because that would mean the acceptance of Jesus as the pathfinder—what then?

SIDONIE (*determined*) Then we've got to show them that Jesus came to explain and to prove.

ROSENTHAL. My dear, suppose they insist they don't want Jesus in the reckoning at all?

SIDONIE. Their need is not yet sufficiently great.

ROSENTHAL. In other words, their seeking of God's purpose is limited by resentment towards a noble figure. It is true that terrible things were done to our ancestors by frightful scoundrels in his name. That is the root of the whole resentment. It makes things very difficult.

SIDONIE (*with a sigh*) I can understand the offensive-

ness of a missionary who comes with a material explanation for the Christ. It is never as fine as Jewish monotheism. But this is so different!

ROSENTHAL (*standing up*) My dear girl, you know how you got your healing, so it seems to you that the light in the heavens must be visible to all eyes.

SIDONIE. Am I not a sufficient witness of it?

ROSENTHAL. True. You have proved your right to believe. But by what have you proved your right to believe any longer in Judaism? You were a devout enough Jewess for years— (*He pauses*).

SIDONIE (*reluctantly*) Yes, and it did not seem to help me. But perhaps I did not look in Judaism for the things which it has in common with Christian Science. Suppose I were to see it manifested, not as material, but as an expression of divine Mind?

ROSENTHAL. At that moment, why would you persist in clinging to Judaism? Because you think you could leave out Jesus who is the key to the problem? Why not accept Christian Science in the full, and forget the impediment of past affiliations?

SIDONIE. Because I might be of help to those in the synagogue. In time, they will let the name of Jesus be spoken with ease among them, they will begin to grasp his contribution, they will come around to the finer comprehension of love as the ruling principle in the universe.

ROSENTHAL. Do the doors of the Christian Science Church look so narrow, that you must turn people away? Is it pride, Sidonie? Be courageous, even if you have to be critical of yourself!

SIDONIE. Don't forget that we preach the one living God!—

ROSENTHAL (*emphatically*) No. As Jews we preached a God who would always think of Israel first. My dear, my dear, you have looked too long through your father's spectacles!

SIDONIE. No, uncle! On the contrary, perhaps you have been too close to Judaism to be able to do it full justice now. (*As he says nothing*) If you can make it clear to me—

ROSENTHAL. I tell you, the truth you have already found is sufficient to put within your grasp the eternal verities of spirit. Do not voice error by believing that you are not sure of what you have gained! As certain as your healing is your knowledge of its wherefore!

SIDONIE (*anxiously*) I've got to know that dad will find accord here when he comes.

ROSENTHAL (*more composed*) There is no difficulty about that.

SIDONIE (*blurting out the confession shame-facedly*) I hesitated about him because I was afraid that if he became a Christian Scientist, he would never adjust himself.

ROSENTHAL (*staring at her in amazement*) Afraid—your father—might become a Christian Scientist! So that was why you wanted Christian Science to become Jewish Science! How our affections play the dickens with our intentions! Still, I am too much the old Adam not to sympathize with your thought, although I am not sufficiently a Scientist to believe that your father will come to believe Judaism a real obstacle as a creed. (*Firmly*) But whatever you think, Sidonie, you certainly cannot believe with your father who does not heal, and

at the same time believe with Jesus who healed because he saw the divinity that encompasses all existence.

SIDONIE (*who has grown more and more distressed*) Dad and I must be helped! We can't stumble along like this, uncertain of each other, and fearful of the future! (*Emphatically*) I must get help! There should be some unbiased person— (*Struck by a thought—quickly*) Why, yes, that's the thing to do! That's what I should have done long ago!

(*She reaches out for the telephone, and pulls it over to herself with feverish haste. Rosenthal is disturbed, but says nothing.*)

SIDONIE (*calling*) Schenly six-nought-nine! . . . . Hello! Hello! Mrs. Perkins' residence? . . . Yes, please. (*She waits, without daring to raise her eyes to her uncle*). Mrs. Perkins? . . This is Sidonie Joseffy. . . . I am at my uncle's office, and—well, I am very anxious that you should come over—as soon as you can. It is something that I can't discuss over the phone. Can you? . . . Oh, thank you! (*She hangs up the receiver, and only then looks at her uncle*).

ROSENTHAL (*avoiding any scolding tone*) Perhaps you should have waited, Sidonie.

SIDONIE (*on the defensive*) For what? I need Mrs. Perkins' clear thought. With her here, we will act sensibly. (*Her resolution vanishing*) Oh, I'm so worried, uncle! (*She is like a little child now*).

ROSENTHAL. You, at any rate, shall be protected!

SIDONIE (*regaining a little of her courage*) You have suffered—you know how such a disturbance can hurt. I want to heal the differences, and to make a new start.

ROSENTHAL. That, too, is one of my hopes—that you will come out of this fit to strengthen the courage of weaklings like myself. I see your hands as carrying precious gifts. (*The telephone rings. There is a pause.* Rosenthal takes up the receiver). Yes. . . Send him in, please. (*He pushes the telephone aside impatiently.*) It's your father. Will you open the door for him?

(*Sidonie's feet drag a little as she walks to the door; but her welcome to her father is energetic enough when she throws her arms about his neck. He looks quite helpless despite his dignity as he gazes over her head at his brother-in-law. When Sidonie releases him, he keeps his arms about her; and so avoids speaking first*).

ROSENTHAL. I can't think of a more appropriate reception to this place than you have just gotten, Ephraim: Suppose you and Sidonie fix yourselves comfortably on that couch, and we can chat across the room.

(*Josephy, cold and aloof, silently places Sidonie on the couch, then walks slowly half way across the room, and comes to a halt near the Lincoln bust. With his back turned towards the wall, his head, seen from the front, is by an odd circumstance in juxtaposition to that of Mary Baker Eddy, and its sternness and implacable decision is in striking contrast to the peaceful features of the founder of Christian Science*).

JOSEFFY. As you know, I am here at Sidonie's prompting. I can understand that you are seeing me for her sake.

ROSENTHAL (*with a wave of the hand*) I know no

reason why I shouldn't see you for your own sake—or (*with a short laugh*) for mine. (*Serious again*) There should not be the least difficulty about our talking without the slightest embarrassment, for we can be considerate enough to be impersonal.

JOSEFFY (*stiffly*) I shall try to be impersonal.

ROSENTHAL. I didn't mean it in quite that sense. Of course, we haven't seen each other for some time, and you can't altogether know how I look at things now. But I don't individualize people as I used to,—that is, if I can help it.

JOSEFFY (*as before*) You will find me unchanged.

SIDONIE (*pleading*) Dad!

JOSEFFY (*turning in her direction*) Yes? (*Catching the look in her eye*) You can be sure, dear, that I will prove very reasonable.

ROSENTHAL (*with a nod of the head*) That's good!

JOSEFFY (*nervously, not understanding his tone*) All this is of great moment to me.

ROSENTHAL. Of course it is. Very serious. But let's not make it so mirthless! We needn't be afraid that if we are less solemn Sidonie will feel lessened respect for our respective judgments.

JOSEFFY. As I understand it, it is *her* judgment that she asks us to question.

ROSENTHAL. I don't think we need devote a lot of time to that, because in the end she will do her own thinking.

JOSEFFY. I, for my part, believe this could have been postponed.

SIDONIE. Dad, now that you are here, would you real-

ly want it so? Would you be happy if we walked out without accomplishing anything definite?

JOSEFFY. My dear, I would much rather that you went quietly home, and then began the long delayed preparations for marriage.

ROSENTHAL (*surprised, and with a glance at Sidonie*) It looks as if that thought were a little abrupt and unexpected.

JOSEFFY (*bridling*) I am not assuming the right to dictate to Sidonie!

ROSENTHAL (*without hostility*) Ephraim, she has been physically helpless so long, that perhaps we have gotten in the habit of advising her at every turn. For instance, I find myself still treating her as a child.

JOSEFFY. I am not aware that I am in any way pre-determining her thinking or her conduct.

ROSENTHAL. But in her eagerness to make us satisfied with her, she feels that she ought to agree with us.

JOSEFFY (*loftily*) Being a minister, and not a business man, my actions and my habits of thinking are supposed to spring from something more remote than the accidents of the hour. If that is the influence of which you speak, I won't gainsay it. As for this new disturbing element, this unexpected interpretation she is beginning to put upon religious thought, although she seeks guidance, I am willing to wait for a less exacting occasion.

SIDONIE. You've been marvellous, dad.

ROSENTHAL (*after a pause—softly*) There can be no two interpretations about that, I suppose.

JOSEFFY (*regarding this as a condescension*) Not so marvellous, or we would not be here.

ROSENTHAL (*interposing before Sidonie can voice a*

*protest)* You can't have expected that she would never have doubts?—Or that if she doubted, she would not ask you to be a party to their clearing up? It sums itself up simply, to me. She feels that she is a Jewess; at the same time she has been healed in Christian Science. As far as I am concerned I would prefer, just as you do, that she be perfectly well before she goes deeply into any discussion. But the healing happens to depend on understanding.

JOSEFFY. So you would counsel her to go on.

ROSENTHAL (*slowly*) Since her condition is mental, you can see that a good deal depends upon the mental attitude of those about her.

JOSEFFY. Surely, I am not expected to share in any non-Jewish thinking she may do!

SIDONIE. Dad, I do want that many of the things I have learned should be acceptable to you. A teaching that makes it possible for me to sit here today without being weakened by the clash of ideas, and permits uncle to be sure that nothing exciting can happen to me must be God-given. Hasn't my lack of fear impressed you, dad?

JOSEFFY. My explanation might not be quite so easy.

SIDONIE. But you have been so fair, that there is no reason why we can't go right on. We'll know where the dissatisfactions have their roots—

JOSEFFY (*almost feverishly*) I don't think any of us are really prepared. The full significance of this can hardly be arrived at by a desultory talk between three people.

(*Once more the telephone rings out sharply.*

*Rosenthal is immensely relieved by the timely interruption).*

ROSENTHAL (*answering the call*) Yes? . . . Of course he may come in! (*He does not rise when he hangs up the receiver*).

(*The door is opened to admit William Pollitz, who enters haughtily*).

SIDONIE (*hurrying over to him in delight*) Billy!

POLLITZ (*kissing her gravely*) Yes, I'm here, Sid!

JOSEFFY (*immediately*) I am glad you are. It was meaningless not to have asked you to come with us.

POLLITZ. I was here before you came.

JOSEFFY (*in surprise*) With Sidonie?

POLLITZ. No; alone. (*Bringing Sidonie back to the couch*) I wanted to go over several things ahead of your arrival. (*With a shrug*) It seems that I over-rated my powers as a diplomat. (*He begins to wander away from Sidonie*).

ROSENTHAL. Why not sit down, Mr. Pollitz, and identify yourself with the younger element here?

POLLITZ (*mechanically coming back to Sidonie and taking a seat beside her, and as mechanically taking the hand which she lays on his arm*) Have I arrived at any stage in the discussion that can be broken off? Sidonie looks tired.

SIDONIE (*withdrawing her hand indignantly*) Why, you haven't even had a good look at me!

POLLITZ (*recapturing her hand*) I can sense it. And it is easy for me to guess that all you have been doing is beating your wings in a void.

ROSENTHAL (*patiently*) Won't you help us, Mr. Pollitz?

POLLITZ (*flashing him a glance of mistrust*) I am afraid that I will be very blunt and very disagreeable. Sidonie may as well hear that I am fully awake now to the dangerous aspects which this problem presents.

ROSENTHAL (*counselling caution by his tone*) Sidonie seems to believe that we will come out all right. It is trite but true that forbearance presents no dangerous aspects.

POLLITZ (*shortly*) It can be a cloak for undesirable experiments.

ROSENTHAL (*with anger*) Just such intolerance kept Sidonie from ever crossing the boundaries of the single book on which she based her entire religious ideas.

POLLITZ (*to Joseffy*) I believe you used the Old Testament for quite a number of years yourself.

JOSEFFY (*to Rosenthal—almost sternly*) I think you do want an answer for that. If so, then I must tell you that the Bible has spoken to me in a very illuminating manner. Its meanings have not thinned out for me. Time has but deepened them.

POLLITZ (*dryly*) Mr. Rosenthal insists on resting his case on what he believes Sidonie got out of the recent special interpretation provided for her.

(*Sidonie shrinks away from him, and again tries to withdraw her hand from his, but he holds it fast*).

ROSENTHAL (*who has let his gaze wander about—bringing it back to the young man*) Mr. Pollitz, how would you like me to regard what has happened?—that

the insight which Sidonie secured of a fine, immutable purpose that we may call God is all a hocus-pocus?—that her deliberate renunciation of a sick self was self-deception?—that to avoid any taint which may come with Christian Science, she is to admit evil into her world as a necessary essential of that world?

JOSEFFY (*impatiently*) We are merely saying the same things over and over.

SIDONIE (*urgently*) You must, all of you, speak out! —without hesitation!

POLLITZ. My dear, my dear, what will it profit us to hear Judaism called material, and be told that we don't heal—always the physical bribe by those who frown down the material!

SIDONIE. "Physical bribe" is an ugly word, Billy.

ROSENTHAL (*very restless, and at a loss*) Come, I can't believe that Mr. Pollitz so misses our idea as to believe that we are after the fleshpots!

POLLITZ. Is it my fault if your methods get confused with your goal?

SIDONIE. But, Billy, Judaism by conceding the spirituality of Christian Science will not weaken its own position.

POLLITZ. You are mistaken! Your uncle's attitude towards Judaism is an evidence of the challenge. Boiled down, it wants us practically to make out a brief for the existence of the God of Israel. To him, our God is but an earth-bound deity, a relic of barbarous days, who balances the material against the spiritual. Against that, your uncle hurls the doctrine of divine Principle, which includes everybody—you, me, the man who is about to be hung, the child in its cradle, the idiot who stumbles along

in darkness, the idea that is now being penned by some great thinker—of course, only the best in all these. (*He shakes his head hopelessly*).

SIDONIE. There is one test, Billy.

POLLITZ. One test for God?

SIDONIE. Why not? In His daily works, through us. Or not at all!

POLLITZ. So the Jew contends, too! But this search in which we are here indulging, is a vulgar game, in its attempt to tear away the veil from the ultimate mystery. The effort to rise higher results in our throwing overboard the necessary ballast which makes us human. To the Christian Scientist, the great stars that pace the universe are fragments of unreality. Organic and inorganic laws are brushed away. Sid, girl, there have been learned Jews who have been mystics, like the Chassidim, but (*and he looks pointblank at Rosenthal*) they didn't take refuge in trying to catch up with the Christian procession!

ROSENTHAL. If you speak in bitterness, Mr. Pollitz, one shouldn't try to match your bitterness, for you are undoubtedly swayed by the long persecution of the Jew by pseudo-Christians.

POLLITZ. I don't care what kind of Christians you call them.

ROSENTHAL. I will call them false Christians because their daily lives scorn the Christ idea, while their pretended reverence expresses itself in material, unChristian institutions. When the persecution of the Jew passes away, Israel will be able to take breath, and then will have the courage to clean away the fungus growth which is choking up its religious life. As a proof of the present lack of spirituality in Judaism, one need only point to

the ambition for a Jewish political state, as if one could materialize the spiritual!

POLLITZ (*with contempt*) As a Zionist, I am sufficiently informed to call a statement of that sort arrant nonsense!

JOSEFFY (*in a strained voice*) This can be no satisfaction to you, Sidonie. You would be better off at home.

POLLITZ. Just a moment, Sid! (*He takes both her limp hands in his*). I have not spoken plainly to you before, dear, because I thought matters would right themselves without our getting into ugly straits. But when I see you patiently sitting here, waiting for us to find some common ground, then I must summon the necessary courage to speak up. All this that you hear is not new. If you could have listened to Talmud Torah students in past ages, and heard their quibbling, you would find this atmosphere singularly familiar. Right now, since you do not have to look at religious theory through the eyes of the sick any longer, but as a Jewess who sees the real sun shining everlasting in a real firmament, you don't have to stray very far away from what you've been told for twenty years.

SIDONIE. Oh, Billy, Billy, do not speak so slightly of the sick! They have brought more misunderstanding about God than any other cause!

POLLITZ. I suppose until Jesus showed that illness was a figment of the imagination?

ROSENTHAL. No, Mr. Pollitz. Until he showed what a contradiction there is between an all-wise Creator and a sick world!

POLLITZ. Are you sure that your Nazarene dreamer did not turn to the halt and the blind and the starving

because their misery made them more gullible to ecstatic visions? And right there is where you and we have our difference in the reading of Holy Writ. We find in it man making a neighbor of God. You find in it God making a ghost out of man!

JOSEFFY (*indignantly*) May I ask how Sidonie is to find clarity of thought against such a background of conflict? This place no longer serves any honest purpose.

SIDONIE. It is in between the words of you all that I am finding my way. But I do want you to speak, too, dad. Don't be afraid that what you say may hurt me. Tell me: you don't like the word Christian, do you?

JOSEFFY (*slowly*) I do not see how I will help you by answering that question.

POLLITZ. Sidonie, don't you know that the "opinion" of people who do not think as we do is called "prejudice"?

JOSEFFY (*as if Pollitz had not interrupted*) No, I do not like the word "Christian" because to me it is a contradiction when used to indicate religious practice. It is hard to overlook the fact that the advent of him who is styled the "Prince of Peace" ushered in a period so intoxicated with hate and with the need of hurting, so intent on destroying the body and soul of Israel, that to the fair-minded student of history Christianity is a colossal insult to liberalism of thought and action. The fact that your uncle says that I am not talking about real Christians does not alter history. There is something pathological in a creed that manages to find an excuse for destruction. In the same way it has championed both sides of all terrible wars.

ROSENTHAL. Christian Scientists would have perished in the torture chamber, on the bonfire, on the block or under the lances or guns of these so-called Christians.

POLLITZ (*laughing incredulously*) There is nothing new in the maltreatment of Christian sect by Christian sect. More important, however, is the possibility that Christian Science has come on the scene to stay the collapse of Christianity as a world religion now robbed of its utility. Jews turn to it, not because they find Judaism an out-worn creed, but through physical or mental distress.

ROSENTHAL (*quietly*) So you insist. But Judaism, too, has recognized that man's adversity is God's opportunity, except that it has been at a loss how to account for this form of Divine conduct.

POLLITZ. You forget the likely end of the story, Mr. Rosenthal. The restless human tide that drifts to you will drift from you to the next explanation of mental healing. I say it from a fairly sympathetic survey of your creed. I am not one of those rabbis who tears a paragraph out of "Science and Health" and holds it up to ridicule, or mocks the personal failings of some healer. (*Rising*) Still, out of discord shall come truth, as out of a flashing nebula are born worlds—and eventually creeds.

JOSEFFY (*coming to the settle*) Yes, Sidonie, let us go.

POLLITZ. Yes, do, girlie! And don't be discouraged. Take all the time you need—months if necessary—to get a right answer for your question.

JOSEFFY (*as Sidonie thrusts herself back, her eyes wide open*) That is no unbearable suggestion.

SIDONIE (*wretchedly*) Dad, Abraham was willing to sacrifice his son at the call of God. This is a call from God, even though I am not as worthy as Isaac. Suppose I do not suffer from this ordeal, but grow the stronger for it? That would be God's answer to you, as he answered Abraham. Why do you lack trust? Deny unfalteringly the logic of Christian Science if you feel that you must, but stay and answer for Judaism. Only in that way, dad, can we ascend!

POLLITZ. How can you be so morbid?

JOSEFFY (*with a wave of the hand to him*) Please! (*To Sidonie*) We are all very human. This has been very difficult to meet calmly.

SIDONIE. If only you will let me go on and finish my healing without anxiety as to where it will lead, without self-accusation—

JOSEFFY. I will do my best, but I cannot remake my conscience in a few hours.

POLLITZ. Sid, don't ask the impossible right now!—from any of us!—

(*The telephone rings again, and Pollitz stops abruptly. Rosenthal answers the ring*).

ROSENTHAL. What is it? . . . . Oh! Tell her to come in, please! (*He hangs up the receiver. To the three at the end of the room*) Pardon me.

(*Sidonie gets to her feet in expectancy as her uncle goes to the door, then sinks back; only to rise again with a look of determination*.

(*Rosenthal opens the door to Mrs. Charles Edward Perkins*).

ROSENTHAL (*putting out his hand*) Honored!

MRS. PERKINS (*shaking hands while she glances quickly at the others*) That sounds very nice!

(*She is tall, straight, enigmatic, self-possessed, and at fifty seems to have successfully defied any serious encroachment of middle age. Small, black, brilliant, humorous eyes are set under a high forehead. There is a suggestion of humor about the full lips. Her manner is leisurely, but it belies great nervous energy. She is an exceptionally well-balanced person, and her visions are very concrete.*)

SIDONIE (*coming forward*) It's so good of you!

(*Pollitz glances quickly at Joseffy, who is looking nowhere in particular and is very uncomfortable. Mrs. Perkins gives Sidonie a hug.*)

SIDONIE (*gravely*) My father, Mrs. Perkins.

MRS. PERKINS (*bowing past Sidonie*) Dr. Joseffy!  
(*He bows silently in return*).

SIDONIE (*continuing the introductions*) Mr. Pollitz—

MRS. PERKINS (*amiably*) Oh, now I know, my dear, who the Mr. Pollitz you spoke of is! At the trial when Mr. Rosenthal did such splendid work in my behalf, Mr. Pollitz was among the very first to congratulate me after the jury brought in the verdict. He said such nice things!  
(*To Pollitz*) I am glad to see you again!

POLLITZ (*with a nod, and trying to conceal the fact that he is nettled*) There is no denying the dramatic interest there is in trials. I attend them regularly and enjoy them as spectacles. Naturally, I take sides.

ROSENTHAL (*hastily drawing up a seat for Mrs. Perkins*) This is an invitation for you to be one of us.

MRS. PERKINS. That isn't difficult at all. (*To Sidonie*) My dear, the roses are blooming in your cheeks. And what a lovely dress you have on! What a contrast to the place itself! (*She looks at the books*).

ROSENTHAL (*laughing*) Oh, well, you must remember that some of the ideas in those books have wandered in shabby places.

MRS. PERKINS. Still, how wonderful the judges look when they quote them!

POLLITZ (*interested in spite of himself, yet hostile*) There was the summing up of one judge which, I remember, you said struck a blow for liberty of conscience.

MRS. PERKINS (*smiling*) I suppose it stood out in contrast to all the absurd things said by the prosecution. Mr. Rosenthal was an offender, too, with his talk about freedom and rights of conscience, because he hesitated to talk about God!

SIDONIE (*who has gone back to the couch*) That's beautifully said. (*Mrs Perkins gives her a little nod*).

POLLITZ. For all that, the jury seemed bewildered. They were asked to reverse what you would call their human judgment.

MRS. PERKINS. I see only the result.

POLLITZ. You do not do sufficient justice to Mr. Rosenthal's deftness in removing the ground from under their feet, and leaving them suspended in thin air, where justice assumes a new guise.

MRS. PERKINS. I think it was the best address I had ever heard! It didn't seem possible that such stolid men could be so interested!

POLLITZ. Mr. Rosenthal almost made them believe in miracles.

MRS. PERKINS. There was the miracle of his pleading for something which could not have been quite clear to him then!

POLLITZ (*pretending to stifle a yawn*) That is a more common condition than is currently appreciated.

ROSENTHAL (*good-humoredly*) I have done better since.

POLLITZ. You mean you could convince them today?

ROSENTHAL. Not by the same method, Mr. Pollitz.

POLLITZ. It is the best possible method at any time. People will always consider ideas like the freedom of conscience a more tangible thing than the steel mills over there.

MRS. PERKINS. And so it is! And you believe it is, Rabbi Pollitz! For it will outlive those mills.

POLLITZ. My reference was to the danger of vague ideals. There has never been freedom of conscience. If there was, you would have refused, in a case like yours, to be tried by the laws that had their rise among men to whom mankind as a whole was so much chattel.

MRS. PERKINS (*with a little shrug*) "Render unto Caesar that which is Caesar's." The jury didn't care about the law. They answered a deeper call. Juries will do it more and more when we cease being cynical about them.

SIDONIE (*out of the depths of her longing*) We must, none of us, be kept eternally on trial!

MRS. PERKINS. My dear, out of our ignorance we create our own court, and jury, and guards, and forbidding judge.

POLLITZ (*with harshness*) Our trial is our self-revelation!

MRS. PERKINS. Like the Hindoo fakirs that lie on nails? No, thank you! I want comfortable upholstering!

POLLITZ. For that which is eternal? (*To Sidonie*) That wasn't spoken in a scoffing spirit. But I don't like to think of your acquisition of good health as falling in quite the same category as a liking for soft upholstering.

MRS. PERKINS (*without resentment*) Nor think of the ill health in the same category as the nails of the fakir, Mr. Pollitz? For that is all it is.

POLLITZ (*leaning forward*) If she denies to the extent of completely detaching herself from facts, like the jury which had the ground taken from under its feet, where do the rest of us come in? If she insists that what she was six months ago is not real, her denial includes us also who were with her then. It means she must deny all human relationships at all times, forswear the bonds which hold her, and which held her, to those who brought her into the world!

SIDONIE (*aghast*) Billy! What are you getting at?

POLLITZ. My dear, I am trying to save the reality of the you that I know from disappearing out of our ken altogether.

MRS. PERKINS (*to Sidonie*) It seems that Mr. Pollitz is somewhat uncertain about human relations as a Scientist views them.

POLLITZ (*his tone bordering on mockery*) Uncertain about the Sidonie that you believe is there? No! How could I be, Mrs. Perkins? Or you, Mrs. Perkins?

MRS. PERKINS. That which is God-given is permanent enough.

JOSEFFY (*so unexpectedly that there is a perceptible start on the part of all except the healer*) Mrs. Perkins, may I ask if you have any children?

MRS. PERKINS (*folding her two hands placidly, and speaking as if the question was natural enough*) My motherhood has been limited to being a sort of "mother in Israel"—helping to raise the stricken, deny sin with them, and understand that God is service inasmuch as He is love.

POLLITZ. Is the difference between ministering and mothering merely a poetical use of words?

MRS. PERKINS (*smiling*) A woman preacher would understand that best.

JOSEFFY (*trying not to show how painful all this is to him*) Little as I understand Christian Science, I cannot believe that it could hold out such an abstracted relationship to Sidonie, and be able to win her interest.

MRS. PERKINS. It offers her a working understanding of everything that goes on about her in terms of spirit. Outside of such an understanding, is there anything of importance, Dr. Joseffy?

JOSEFFY (*with unexpected vehemence*) Don't mistake me! If I believed for one moment that the acceptance of Christian Science principles would rid the world of ills because it encompassed the idea of God more fully than Judaism does, I would come to it, despite my loathing of what Christianity has brought in its two thousand years of false idealism and thwarting of hopes. Without it, the world would have arrived at the monotheism of Israel, and the race would have escaped five hundred years of mediaeval barbarism. To allow Christian Science to remake human reasoning on the scale which it threatens is

to forget how painfully civilization is coming into its own. If I speak forcibly it is as a reminder that we must think forcibly!

MRS. PERKINS (*simply*) I understand exactly how you feel. At one time I had just that battle against accepting a creed which would so profoundly change my world for me. I had lived so long with the image of God as a god of wrath, of punishment, and even of revenge, I had so long assented to the idea of a material Jesus giving up a material body as a sacrifice to appease such a wrathful God, that I believed Christian Science born of Satan! I had been accustomed to approaching God as if He had to be humored like a spoiled child, or flattered like a vain woman. Naturally, when I first read Mrs. Eddy, I utterly despised her and those who, through weak-mindedness and self-deception, believed her and followed her. They appeared to be deceiving themselves in order to accomplish some selfish purpose. (*She pauses, as if to build up the contrast.*) After the storm, the calm, Dr. Joseffy! All the babel of confusion, all my resentment, became very laughable. Since then, all that has taken place in my life has been on that plane of peace. I bring you this message of peace hopefully.

POLLITZ (*cautiously*) Of course, we appreciate your coming here to help us.

MRS. PERKINS (*surprised*) I had not been aware of any particular purpose in my being here.

SIDONIE. It was I, Billy, who phoned Mrs. Perkins when my talk with uncle brought out so many difficulties.

POLLITZ (*with a bow to Mrs. Perkins*) My mistake!

ROSENTHAL (*severely*) Neither Mrs. Perkins nor myself, Mr. Pollitz, have endeavored to thrust explanations

upon Sidonie, even if we judged that we had a right to do so.

POLLITZ (*urbanely*) I do not question that. Still, with all due respect to your thoughtfulness, there is a particular kind of burning that is called "error" and it would seem to justify saving from the burning such brands as are worth saving.

MRS. PERKINS (*as Rosenthal is about to flare up in angry retort*) And only a little while ago, Mr. Pollitz, you pointed out that for us Sidonie did not represent a human personality. (*Smiling*) Don't you suppose that if one is going to think of people as brands, one is likely to get burned? No, Mr. Pollitz; in Science there are no brands to be saved from the burning. There is light, but without heat. The command that came to Sidonie to cast out her sick self, came from within.

POLLITZ. In other words, each one is to be his or her own Messiah!

MRS. PERKINS. "Even thou hast said it!" Is not the whole world struggling to be released from numbing materialism, turmoil, suffering and unrest? To bicker with a world which hungers for august things is to enthrone wretchedness for all time!

JOSEFFY (*who has been watching Sidonie and sees how she hangs on every word*) And up to this time, Mrs. Perkins, are we to consider that God has been a negligible factor in this world? I read history as the recital of the upward climb of mankind through suffering.

MRS. PERKINS. Ah, but your Bible shows you a long line of wise men who sought ways and means to end the suffering. When it finally reached an intolerable point, when all the highways to and from Rome into Europe,

Asia and Africa were congested with the wretched and forlorn and suffering, and the world, uneasy under its corruption, waited, even as a sufferer waits for the morning during a night of pain, complete illumination came through one who was competent to meet the need. Jesus came to proclaim man spiritual; hence man must live accordingly. (*Her voice rising*) Once more the roads of the world are crowded with the wretched and despairing. Forget the outward show of material success! The need will have to be met!

JOSEFFY (*reluctant to appear controversial, yet impressed to the point of offering a rejoinder*) God gives man trials to test him, to see whether he can escape his lower nature with its lust for power or for ease and pleasure. Suffering, sorrow, and the temptation to sin hold out the choice between good and evil. Through this choice, either we ascend, or the mark of the beast remains for all time on us. This is neither materialism nor error. It is man's struggle out of a lower nature into a higher.

ROSENTHAL. Ephraim, if you will turn that over in your own mind, and study its contradictions, you will be self-answered.

JOSEFFY (*with dignity*) I cannot conceive that God would make sport of us by giving us the gifts to shape the world to our will, and then have us spurn the world as an illusion. I accept our civilization and our daily life as illuminated by a purpose that is pre-eminently practical. It has its roots in the soil of millions of years which went before life finally shaped itself on this earth. It speaks out of the experience of the lower forms of life climbing to a higher and intelligent self, and culminating

in man. That requires neither saving, nor the exorcising of devils. It does need more illumination, more enlightenment, more education, more self-sacrifice. For that the Jew has always fought, with unparalleled intensity, just as he has struggled out of idolatry to monotheism.

POLLITZ (*who has been restless and impatient*) Can't you see that while we speak of one world, they speak of another?

JOSEFFY (*as if humiliated by the sudden discovery*) Yes, I am merely arguing. (*He looks towards Sidonie*).

SIDONIE (*interpreting the glance—speaking in a tired voice*) Dad, if you wish, we will go home.

POLLITZ (*hastily*) Not right away. Please, Sid! I would like to broach an idea which may be of some help at this unhappy juncture. (*To Joseffy*) It is that Sidonie take a trip somewhere, for a year or two, anyway, out of this confusion.

(*Rosenthal leans forward to speak, then sits back without a word*).

JOSEFFY (*impatiently*) You have suggested that before. It should not be necessary for Sidonie to go to such lengths to find ease of mind. She can do so in her own home.

POLLITZ. I am thinking of the diversion it would provide. She and her mother can visit new countries, see new peoples and new customs. There are a number of tours, attractively arranged to smooth out the way for the traveller.

JOSEFFY (*as before*) She can certainly go if she wishes. But in her present state of health, I fail to see

the wisdom of it. And the glamor of tourist life cannot stand close scrutiny.

POLLITZ. She will gain in strength, and with it an increasing interest in the life about her. We will all make it a point not to feel badly about losing her for a short time. (*Turning to her*) Sidonie, I don't know what sort of a honeymoon we would have if we married right away, because I hope a lot of my ambitious plans will materialize in the next six months, and I can't ask Louisville for any leave of absence just after my appointment.

SIDONIE (*in a low voice*) But to send me away, Billy!

ROSENTHAL (*gently*) It isn't meant that way, child.

SIDONIE. The Holy Days are coming that have always meant so much to me! (*After a pause*) I think I wouldn't want to stay away from the synagogue on the Holy Days.

JOSEFFY (*decisively*) Then you shall stay!

ROSENTHAL (*exasperated*) And perpetuate her distress?

POLLITZ (*to Josephy*) That's the prime consideration just now.

SIDONIE (*to Mrs. Perkins—plaintively*) Won't you say something?

MRS. PERKINS. My dear, there can be but one right course. If you will believe that, you will require neither direction nor opinion.

POLLITZ (*with a superior smile*) Sid, you spoke of not wanting to miss the services during the Holy Days. Remember that you can carry the thought of what the synagogue means wherever you go. Our place of worship and our services offer nothing mystical, nothing that could not be preached under the open sky in the broad

sunlight. Take the trip abroad that I suggest. You are entitled to a play period, a holiday—to celebrate your better health, for one thing.

ROSENTHAL. Mr. Pollitz is right, Sidonie, in admonishing you not to rule your actions by fear.

SIDONIE. And is that all that any of you can tell me?—that either I should take my doubts abroad with me, or stay at home with them?

POLLITZ. Come, Sid, you don't know the extent of your demands on us. In what sort of a frame of mind would you expect your father on the one hand and Mr. Rosenthal on the other to come out of such a meeting as you want if they each made momentous concessions? If you are going to stress love as the certain ground under your feet, give us the chance to hold on to it.

SIDONIE (*to him—more and more hopeless*) All that you are anxious about is that I should ask no more questions for some time to come.

POLLITZ. Very well, Sid; leave it at that. It saves me the unpleasant business of rehearsing just what your father and I owe to the many to whom we stand as the Levites at one time did—guardians of the Temple!

SIDONIE. Surely, Billy, it can't be of your position, or that of father that you are really thinking!

POLLITZ (*turning to Mrs. Perkins*) Are there not resting places on the way to the goal which is called Christian Science? Or must Sidonie hurry on precipitately for fear that she will lose her zeal?

MRS. PERKINS. Sidonie must go to her understanding to find her way. (*Turning to her*) Dear, above all, do not fear that there will be no place where your Heavenly Father is not.

POLLITZ And, Sid, let us give a thought to the earthly father as well. There is no degradation in making concessions to paternity as the symbol of eternal life.

ROSENTHAL (*warningly*) Child, your thoughts will become clearer when you consider your own spiritual needs first.

SIDONIE (*coming to her father unsteadily*) Dad, I am very tired. I—I must get away.

JOSEFFY (*alarmed, and putting a steady arm about her*) So you shall, at once!

POLLITZ (*hastening forward anxiously*) You're not feeling ill?

ROSENTHAL (*who has risen*) Sidonie, deny that thought!

SIDONIE (*leaning against her father*) I'm not ill. Daddy, you're not angry, are you, about my having brought you here?

(*Rosenthal, who has had difficulty in restraining himself, groans and turns away helplessly*).

JOSEFFY (*conscious only of the weight in his arms*) No! No! I'm not angry about anything! Don't doubt that you've been anything but a great help to me. You have given significance to life, dear. You have made it impossible for me to narrow my life. That should save you from isolation! (*He kisses her*).

POLLITZ (*pointedly*) Was there ever a finer article of faith? And now for home!

ROSENTHAL (*looking at his watch*) You will find my car downstairs. Use it.

POLLITZ (*as Joseffy shows hesitation in accepting the offer*) We can get a taxicab in a moment in the street.

SIDONIE. We will use uncle's car. (*She smiles at that man*). And thank you, too, Mrs. Perkins—for everything.

MRS. PERKINS. I also am grateful, Sidonie.

(*Pollitz, who has taken Sidonie's wrap from the couch, throws it about her. As Joseffy leads her out, Pollitz is about to follow, but Rosenthal intercepts him, and with a peremptory gesture, motions him to stay... Then the attorney shuts the door, and hastens to explain*).

ROSENTHAL. I think they had better be left to themselves, don't you?

POLLITZ (*resentfully*) You want me left behind because you think I would take advantage of the situation! Whereas you regard Joseffy as harmless! Very well!—I shall stay long enough to get something off my mind!

ROSENTHAL (*turning from him*) I didn't think there was anything more to say.

POLLITZ. Polite things, no! But here's where my politeness goes into the discard! You both had your chance to send her away somewhat reassured, and, instead, here she is half-crazed with doubt! Dr. Joseffy didn't realize what was happening under his very nose!

ROSENTHAL (*with restraint*) You are the man Sidonie is going to marry: that gives you certain rights, but not the liberty to make absurd charges against people who care for her.

POLLITZ. In a case like this, mistrust is essential for self-preservation. (*More angrily*) Joseffy doesn't see that when Sidonie has gotten over today's fiasco, she will

resent the way he walked off with her tucked under his arm like a prize!

ROSENTHAL (*with studied patience*) Mrs. Perkins, are we to take this young man seriously?

POLLITZ. The trouble is *you* haven't been taken seriously enough! The subtlety with which you sowed your words has been an education to me. I tell you, until now I left you people alone. Henceforth it is war! Joseffy was right when he opposed my foolish tolerance by charging that you were all dangerous!

ROSENTHAL. Well, whatever you may do about us, leave father and daughter severely alone, particularly if you want to hold Sidonie's respect.

POLLITZ. I'll risk that! She's got to be saved before her personality is bleached dry and left purposeless—a warning to others, perhaps, but a disaster to those who hoped for something differently for her!

ROSENTHAL (*conciliatory*) Come, sit down and talk sensibly! You can be better than the plaything of your feelings! Consider how much Sidonie has been buoyed by your cheerfulness in the past. Criticism and censure from you would be the worst possible thing for her.

POLLITZ. It seems to me you've been staking a great deal on the kindness of others! All the concession is to come from the other side! Well, Sidonie is not going to come near you again if I can help it! You may have regarded me as a good-natured, negligible factor in this thing, but I'll disappoint you! (*He goes out precipitately*).

(*Rosenthal stands gazing moodily after him*).

MRS. PERKINS. You used to be an excellent lawyer,

who was rarely discomfited by an opponent's excitability.

ROSENTHAL (*dismally*) In what a state she left! Consider the disturbing influences at work around that child. It is not heroic to let them have the last word with her. How frail she looked!—how anxious to be set right! There is no pity in man's prejudices! It is like a hungry wolf! I should have gone home with them, despite my wish to make my demonstration by remaining here. (*He sits down at the desk again, his face wrinkled with worry*).

MRS. PERKINS (*without raising her voice*) Mr. Rosenthal, you are looking error straight in the eye, and yet you don't see its impotence!

ROSENTHAL. I wish I could. My material thinking keeps getting in the way. You saw how I acted!

MRS. PERKINS. Are we to resort to the unfortunate line of thought that Dr. Joseffy and Mr. Pollitz find necessary to satisfy those about them?

ROSENTHAL. But that is the young man she is going to marry and spend her life with!

MRS. PERKINS. No, not the one you are now seeing through your mist of error.

ROSENTHAL. And think: back in that house is this girl's mother, sick herself, who in her desperation got Sidonie to write me from Michigan to send her "Science and Health"—and now must keep quiet!

MRS. PERKINS. Yet that mother had sufficient character, and love, and mother-wisdom not to come here today.

ROSENTHAL. Sidonie should not have telephoned you. I could have managed them somehow. And she would have had you to fall back on later.

MRS. PERKINS. Read your Bible lesson for the week.

ROSENTHAL (*with a sigh*) I suppose I sound like Mr. Pollitz when I say that this is a lesson for a lifetime.

MRS. PERKINS. Have you stopped to consider that it may be the turning point, the chemicalization of which our dear Leader speaks?

ROSENTHAL. It is inaction that frets me. Mrs. Eddy doesn't demand that. I should never have let him take her away!

MRS. PERKINS. But remember, too, that she says, "Our true temple is no human fabrication, but the superstructure of Truth, reared on the foundation of Love, and pinnacled in life." Take into account what is assuredly ahead of us. The hands on the dial of the universe point to the hour when we shall hear great tidings. Man will then truly be as the Son of God. What place can our impatience have in the approaching hour of annunciation?

(*Rosenthal seeks to shake off his depression. Mrs. Perkins prepares to go. The curtain falls as she holds out her hand to him smilingly in parting*).

(*Curtain*)

(*Two weeks intervene between Acts II and III*)

## ACT III

The scene is the same as in Act I. The time is late morning.

A committee of five, who represent the trustees of Dr. Joseffy's synagogue, is awaiting him; it includes a physician, an attorney, two merchants, and a banker, the last in the person of Charles Laempfert.

The physician, Dr. Stanley Kantor, is lying full length on the settle, with no pretence at dignity. The others appear to take for granted his disregard of the comportment required by the occasion. Kantor is given to highly colored ties and stockings, and loose tweed garments. The customary Vandyke beard is in evidence, and his heavy-lidded eyes regard the world somewhat cynically through gold-rimmed glasses.

In the chair on the left of the fireplace, and grateful for the warmth that its logs shed, is Leopold Brenner, the owner of a department store on a modest scale. He is tall, thin, asthmatic, impatient and pessimistic. Despite the hopeless character of his outlook on the life lived by the bulk of his fellows, he is vehement in his earnestness and tireless in the acceptance of synagogue responsibilities. His burning desire "to have things right" leads him into all sorts of kindnesses to his fel-

lows, with the result that he makes them far happier than he himself can possibly be.

Flanking the fireplace is Joseph Wallach, another merchant, and the owner of a very large department store, who is physically and mentally Brenner's antithesis. He is short, with rosy, smooth features, hair carefully brushed, is fastidiously dressed, and as he gazes placidly before him, seems to float gently on a sea of mental ease which no storm has ever ruffled.

Charles Laempfert is behind the library table. He is busy with some papers; but although he frequently makes notes on the sheets before him, he is alert to the general conversation.

On the other side of the library table, as if desirous of basking in the radiance cast by the banker's presence, is Albert Shotton, an attorney. He is a young man, with pointed features, grey eyes, prematurely grey hair, a judicial aspect, and is careful in public to maintain a close guard over his emotions.

Shotton is the only one who is not smoking. With the exception of Dr. Kantor all are very serious, and conscious of an important errand.

SHOTTON (*in the crisp, precise tones of one addressing a courtroom*) There is no use trying to understand why Dr. Joseffy has persisted in not taking us into his confidence.

WALLACH (*cheerfully*) Family affairs don't make good advertising, even if it happens to be the best family of its kind in the world.

BRENNER. It's upset me more than anything that's happened recently! Kantor will tell you! (*He jerks his head in the direction of the physician*).

DR. KANTOR (*with a drawl*) Your stomach can't stand your nerves, and your nerves aren't made for this kind of a world. That's makes you a hundred percent American business man, Brenner.

BRENNER (*looking at Kantor*) They don't know I had to stay in bed for a day!

DR. KANTOR. The difference between you and Dr. Joseffy is that he hasn't taken his tattered nerves to bed. That's where he belongs. If he had gone there a week ago, he wouldn't have handed us any resignation, and created the most amazing situation in the synagogue since Rosenthal dropped us.

BRENNER (*almost stammering with indignation*) We don't have to accept it, that's all! No reason—not even any reason Dr. Joseffy can give—is right for a hasty action like that!

SHOTTON. Reason, as we understand it, may have nothing to do with his resignation.

DR. KANTOR (*dryly*) You mean, it's not the sort of reason you could convince a jury with.

BRENNER (*gloomily*) It hasn't convinced us, or we wouldn't be here. (*With sudden vigor*) Yes, yes, we must insist that he drop all that and take a leave of absence! Think of Christian Science—eh, what is the word?—yes, defiling the synagogue in that way!

DR. KANTOR. You mean "defying", Brenner, or something else.

BRENNER (*waving this aside*) Isn't Sidonie defiling it? None of you really have got the courage to say so! We know next to nothing of what has been going on. As Shotton says, for some reason we have not been taken into Dr. Joseffy's confidence.

SHOTTON. I didn't quite say that, Brenner. But it is the same thing. The situation proves that, in one way or another, our big men are lonely individuals.

DR. KANTOR. When are your particular moments of loneliness, Al?

SHOTTON (*snapping back*) When I attempt to follow your witticisms!

(*There is silence, as if the others wished to rebuke the principals for chancing differences on such an occasion*).

BRENNER (*clearing his throat with a rasping sound that make them all turn to him*) Kantor, as an old friend of the family, you ought to insist on seeing Sidonie.

DR. KANTOR (*coming to a sitting position*) I'll do much better if I insist on giving Dr. Joseffy some professional advice, and take up the slack on his physical condition. I don't feel like interfering in Sidonie's affairs at this stage—I'd be like the proverbial fifth wheel to the wagon. She seems to be getting better again, and if Joseffy says that she is getting around after her setback, despite all his fears about her, that ought to settle it.

BRENNER (*grieving*) And her relapse, instead of being a warning to her of God's anger, simply makes her more anxious to get back to those Christians!

DR. KANTOR (*to Laempfert*) Charles, what has Joseffy been saying to you, anyway? I don't mean those things that you don't mind our telling our wives.

LAEMPFERT (*laying down his papers*) He has hardly told me more than you know already. (*Knitting his eyebrows*) I don't seem to have been of much help to him.

SHOTTON (*quickly*) No one could expect to be under the circumstances.

BRENNER (*cracking his knuckles*) I don't know! I don't know! I am not convinced that he would have gotten so desperate as to resign if we had made it our business to know about Sidonie. (*Hastening to make amends for his tone*) I am not criticizing, understand! But after Rosenthal's disgusting actions, we should have made it impossible for anybody to look in the direction of these Christian Scientists!

DR. KANTOR (*adopting the professional tone*) Gentlemen, if you will remember that Dr. Joseffy is meeting an abnormal situation in an abnormal way, you will be prepared for anything today, and will act accordingly.

WALLACH (*blandly*) I've got a woman in my store whose specialty is treating the nerves of the girls. I don't know what she says to them or what she does. It's supposed to improve business. I haven't got any nerves myself, but that's no reason why others aren't entitled to them. Between you and me, with hysterical people you're beaten before you start, and I'd be the last one to take chances opposing a girl like Sidonie. Looks to me as if this had more angles to it than some of my veteran sales-ladies.

SHOTTON (*critically*) I don't feel quite the way you do about Sidonie, Wallach.

DR. KANTOR. That's right. Sidonie is an unusual individual, and you can't prescribe ordinary standards of judgment in her case.

BRENNER. But that's just the trouble! What she does influences others. Now they've started talking, God knows when they'll finish!

DR. KANTOR (*to Laempfert*) Charles, what has been the effect of Joseffy's resignation on her?

LAEMPFERT. I don't think she has heard of it yet. (*There is a general stir of surprise*). No one in the house told her, and she hasn't been out except to go driving with her mother. (*With a slight shrug of the shoulders*) I don't say she shouldn't be told. (*He returns to his papers*).

SHOTTON. Pretty bad!

WALLACH. I'm sorry for Dr. Joseffy.

BRENNER. I say with all my heart: damn that man Rosenthal! We've been too easy with him. His leaving Pittsburgh comes a little too late to suit me!

DR. KANTOR. You're only wasting your breath, Brenner. We'd never beat him at this game. All he has to do is to fold his two hands and look pious—and we can't look pious.

SHOTTON. Yes, he's been playing the sort of Christian that children read about in their Sunday School books and don't believe in.

DR. KANTOR. A newly converted Jew is likely to do it better than the man who traces his Christianity back to the Spanish inquisition.

BRENNER (*violently*) It shows that the synagogue is helpless when attacked by renegades! I tell you, if I had my way—

LAEMPFERT (*interposing*) We'll have our way, Brenner. No great harm has yet been done. I feel that with the particularly favorable conditions with which we have surrounded this visit, matters will adjust themselves.

BRENNER (*querulously*) If we win out, all right; it will mean we're doing something. Let me tell you, I

for one am tired of institutions that just let off steam to show people they're there! What's more, I say: Gentlemen, watch our women folks! They're like sheep. Every girl is standing with her mouth open (*suiting the action to the word*) trying to understand why Sidonie should be paying attention to Christian Science.

DR. KANTOR (*putting out an argumentative finger*) Mark my word!—Sooner or later physicians are going to get together to take steps against Christian Science propaganda! Then watch the fur fly! We'll demand positive proof of cures. We'll lock up every healer under whose hands a case dies. We'll make their preposterous claims so unpopular, that there won't be a lot of Rosenthals flocking to their defence.

WALLACH (*grinning at Shotton*) The legal profession will defend anything.

SHOTTON (*unbending somewhat*) Otherwise, how could you folks sleep safely at night?

WALLACH (*enjoying the retort hugely*) You go to the head of the class!

DR. KANTOR. I'm serious, gentlemen! The medical profession's indifference is going to prove a boomerang. We ought to insist that every case of cancer these people claim to cure, every broken bone that knits correctly without being set, every insane individual who has been made sane by "treatment", be backed up by affidavits and sworn statements and photographs. No testimonials written from the ends of the earth by neurotic women with an itch to get imaginary ailments into print. If Mrs. Jones of Timbuctoo claims to have dissipated a carcinoma with prayer, proof or jail!

SHOTTON (*with a wave of the hand*) And make martyrs

out of them! They have the money and the backing to carry any fight to the highest tribunals of the land. Antagonism is fruitful soil for all propaganda. Look what it did to Rosenthal, the last man in the world to have succumbed! The only method of fighting them is through medical education.

WALLACH. Kantor should worry! There will always be plain people with plain aches who will be cured by getting a Latin prescription filled at the corner drug-store. Shotton, what would you do if the "absent treatment" crowd wanted to get rid of the legal profession, and settled everything by prayer? Rosenthal must believe that, or he wouldn't be giving up his practice.

SHOTTON. The moment they start settling property disputes by prayer, you can say good bye to our whole civilization, and there won't be any use worrying about anything.

DR. KANTOR. You know, I've given a lot of thought to Rosenthal. He's a puzzle to me. Digestion all right, never missed a meal in his life, strong as an ox, a stickler for logic—and now he's ready to cure baldness with prayer and raise the dead.

WALLACH. Hard on Dr. Joseffy to have Sidonie getting absent treatment by phone from that lady healer, although it was considerate of her not to bring her here.

BRENNER (*angrily*) How do we know that this second recovery of hers isn't just an accident, and that she'll never really get much better?

LAEMPFERT (*warningly*) Sh! (*As silence follows this*) I would advise you to be very careful about mentioning either Sidonie's or Rosenthal's name when Dr. Joseffy is present. We will do better to stick to the point.

Sympathy will mean a great deal to him, but it must not degenerate into fault-finding.

BRENNER. I say again, suppose he doesn't give in? The fact that he is not a well-to-do man won't influence him. You know he couldn't make much of a living if he tried to teach. He wouldn't have much heart for lecturing on religious subjects of a general kind.

DR. KANTOR. Still, some rabbis travel around the country talking to "goyem" about the Jewish problem or civic reform, and get well paid for their oratory.

BRENNER. If he leaves the pulpit, the Christian Scientists will think they put it over on us!

LAEMPFERT. We must show no hesitation or doubt when we talk to him. (*As if delivering part of a prepared speech*) It is his duty to stand by the community in this hour of general disquiet. We have come here for impersonal rather than for personal reasons. The future of the people he has gathered about him is at stake.

BRENNER. All right. You talk along those lines, and we'll follow suit.

LAEMPFERT. When I call on you individually, don't go into details. We must avoid making the wrong kind of an impression.

WALLACH (*half aloud*) I had something written down.

(*As he fumbles in his pockets, the door to the rear opens, and Dr. Joseffy comes in. He is, of course, conscious of their errand, and without speaking, turns to shut the door.*

(*When he faces them, it is evident that Dr. Kantor was correct in calling him a sick man. He is haggard, his features are drawn in pain, his*

*eyebrows are unnaturally contracted, in moments of excitement he trembles, and when he speaks, he has difficulty with his voice.*

*(His visitors have risen, Laempfert getting to his feet with deliberate slowness. All through the scene that follows, the banker acts with the positiveness he has demanded of the others).*

JOSEFFY *(as he shakes hands with them, one after another, beginning with Shotton)* Albert, how are you, my boy? *(To Brenner)* Leopold, I'm glad to see you. Stanley—*(to Kantor)*; Joseph—*(to Wallach)*; Charles *(to Laempfert. To all—gravely)* I expected you, even before Charles called me up.

WALLACH. We wouldn't be denied, as they say!

JOSEFFY *(groping for the right answer, and failing to find it)* Yes?

*(He goes behind the table, and sinks down heavily. Only by an effort at the beginning does he keep his attention on his visitors.)*

*(Laempfert moves to a position before the fireplace, where he towers above the others, who have resumed their seats uneasily. The banker is confident and rarely at a loss for a word. He speaks with impressive dignity).*

LAEMPFERT *(looking straight ahead, away from Josef)* I am going to begin by saying that this is a time when we must find a way to unity. If we don't, we will pay an increasingly heavy price. The Jew is getting indifferent in religious matters. So he becomes a prey for the anti-Semite. Israel must organize for common defence. When I say that, I am no believer in becoming

sentimental over some out of the way place in the Orient and calling it the Jewish homeland. We'll be at home wherever we please! And we will fight for our rights wherever we are! If this is a world of claw and tooth, at least we will know how to use them!

BRENNER. That's right!

LAEMPFERT. I say all this, Dr. Joseffy, because we think that you, of all men in America, thoroughly understand the Jew and his problems. All we now ask is that you hear us through.

JOSEFFY. Charles, I am too much in debt to all of you— (*He finds it hard to continue*).

LAEMPFERT. We are counting on our mutual indebtedness. (*His voice grows more strident*) We are here to tell you that we find it impossible to accept your resignation. Mind you, we make no plea for ourselves; we would sacrifice our inclinations and our feelings if your peace of mind demanded it. (*He pauses*).

JOSEFFY (*with an effort*) Yes, yes, I know.

LAEMPFERT. I do not exaggerate our feelings when I say that we are greatly worried. The moral integrity of our community is involved. Not because of any single individual's doing! It would be superficial to think that. Sooner or later a new attack was bound to be launched against us from some quarter. The result is, we are confronted with the most damnable underground menace in our experience. Someone here a little while ago spoke of the Spanish Inquisition. The Inquisition was nothing compared to it—we could always stand persecution and torture without losing our identity. This is a danger of a peculiar kind. Only the American Jew can understand it. Our people in Europe could never

conceive how serious this is, for they would not understand how we could be misled by the intentions of any kind of Christianity. This new threat is not local to Pittsburgh only. It is national. Worst of all, it is baited with the pretence that its propaganda is not anti-Semitic.

DR. KANTOR (*solemnly*) You've hit the nail on the head!

LAEMPFERT. As it is, I haven't begun to do justice to the gravity of the situation. But I hope that I have intimated how we look upon it, and why we have come to ask you to withdraw your resignation. We do not know one person who sums up as you do all the qualifications necessary to take the matter properly in hand. None of the other ministers would understand it as you do. Under the circumstances your resignation would deprive Israel in America of vital help at a serious time.

(*He ceases, and faces Joseffy for an answer.*

*Joseffy begins in an uncertain voice, and as he talks, he clasps and unclasps his hands).*

JOSEFFY. It is hard for me to tell you what is on my mind. I have been in great distress. There are times when I cannot believe that this happened in my own household. (*He struggles to compose himself*). I am not resigning because I fear that the synagogue will get entangled in my troubles. I have too much faith in your collective strength for that. I resigned because I want to go away for a long time with Sidonie. I want to save her from this nightmare that she calls a religion. It is impossible for me to think of her and think of my work. My friends, I've got to help her.

LAEMPFERT. Very well, then: take a leave of absence.

JOSEFFY. At the same time that I set out to do what

I can for Sidonie, I must get my own religious life straightened out. I have failed—no doubt about it! I could never have failed if my religion had meant for me what it should. The question is not one of occupying a pulpit or answering to a certain formula of service in that pulpit. This goes deeper. It touches the very depths of belief. If I had been as one with God, this could never have happened. Now, together with Sidonie, I must find out what is the matter.

LAEMPFERT. Will any man who would take your place have a better answer? Could he go any deeper, or be more honest? Would he know how to deal with the inroads which Christian Science is making in our homes? Now that we have taken the trouble to look, we have found its literature where it should never have appeared!

JOSEFFY (*starting up in alarm*) Where?

LAEMPFERT. What does it matter where? Specific cases, mean less than the fact itself. If you stay, we have an even chance for success to combat that. If you go away, that very step will heighten the interest in Christian Science.

JOSEFFY (*as if it were irrevocable*) Sidonie is my test, Charles, as to whether my Judaism is sound, and whether I can minister to any community. Meanwhile, she, too, is striving to get the truth for herself. If I can turn the tide for her against this creed, it will set me right at the same time. It cannot be done in a week, or a month, perhaps not even in a year. It can't be done by forcing the issue. See how she collapsed under the strain. My friends, I feel at this hour that the synagogue

itself tells me to make this choice, to put myself on trial, without which I would be but as a hollow vessel.

LAEMPFERT (*beginning to grow impatient*) Are you not creating a purely hypothetical difficulty? The synagogue chooses its leaders for the immediate service they can give. It does not expect them to answer every question, but to seek the truth within its walls. If after you go away, you come back dissatisfied, to find that we have drifted on the rocks, will you be sure that you could not have come to our aid? You are ready for the battle against Christian Science at this very moment! It is the need of the hour! I have talked with people from New York, Chicago, St. Louis, San Francisco—everywhere it is the same story! The Jew is becoming an appreciable element in the Christian Science Church. Jews are renouncing Judaism—not the atheistic newcomers from Eastern Europe, but conservative Jews, with money, respectability, good connections. They are not ashamed of it. Worse than that, their Jewish friends explain it away without showing any ill-feeling. That can't go on!

JOSEFFY (*throwing out his hands convulsively*) Am I the proper person to create sentiment for a sounder Judaism when I have been unable to keep my own household together?

(*The protest is immediate and general, and except for Laempfert all speak at once*).

DR. KANTOR. You couldn't possibly help it! It might have happened to any of us!—

SHOTTON. No man could have foreseen such a happening, Dr. Joseffy!—

WALLACH. You're not fair to yourself! Imagine a girl like Sidonie listening to that stuff!—

BRENNER. We haven't had any idea like that! What a woman does is beyond any of us!—

LAEMPFERT (*cutting sharply across the din*) Just a moment! (*The others are silenced*). If it can make this headway in your household, how soon before it will begin to break up our own? You may as well say that Israel should give up all religious effort until it settles this. No! It will pray and work! By remaining, you not only meet the issue locally, but your voice will reach into the four corners of the country. (*Turning to the others*) Is it not so?

(*There is an expectant stir*).

SHOTTON. Dr. Joseffy, if we don't rally our forces today, to-morrow there may not be enough of practical Judaism left worth saving.

BRENNER (*in his nervousness having difficulty with his words*) I say that, too! Let us be warned by Rosenthal! Much more of that sort of thing, and Judaism is discredited among our own people!

WALLACH. I'm ready to give every dollar I can spare. I've given money for all sorts of reforms in this city. Now I'm ready to give it for something really necessary.

DR. KANTOR. Dr. Joseffy, I am approaching this from the physician's point of view, who sees a superstition getting its grip on increasing numbers of people. It works on their weakness and their credulity. It plays on their fears while taking advantage of their helplessness. Now, I ask you, what is to become of real science if fakirs are allowed to go unchallenged who make the claims that these people do? What possible respect will our people have for learning if scientific knowledge, fought for and

established after a hundred years of research, is to be belittled? The attack will next come on education. They will want to influence the work of the schools. They will criticise it as being too material. We shall suddenly find the road to progress blocked. The time to rouse the people is now!—before these upstarts become too powerful!

SHOTTON. Exactly! As soon as they feel their strength, they will ride rough-shod over us!

DR. KANTOR. It's a serious business! The ages during which we have been struggling to get control over material resources are very much of a joke to that tribe—we're to throw away the lever with which we are moving nature!

SHOTTON (*taking a step forward as Kantor finishes*) Dr. Joseffy, speaking for the Jewish members of the bar in this city—and I know their opinion—I can say that they would consider it subversive to the moral purpose of this community if they could not make a concerted effort through you to stamp out this proselytism. Eddyism, logically followed out, would practically destroy the usefulness and influence of the court of law, since it denies the validity of legal reasoning by denying that any real difference of opinion can exist in matters of justice. Ultimately it will destroy that respect for property which is the basis of life in this world. Our civilization may become a drifting derelict.

DR. KANTOR. Then consider the gross, sensual, material reaction that will follow after people have been disillusioned about the vacuum they have created!

WALLACH. I hear they charge pretty stiff prices for healing, so it don't look like a vacuum for somebody.

BRENNER. No objection as long as they practice that on their Christian neighbors! We've tolerated them too long. (*Indignantly*) We let men like that real estate sharp Perkins, the husband of the healer Sidonie is going to, get money from our banks for speculation! I tell you—

LAEMPFERT (*breaking in*) Ephraim, this is a call to arms! The American Jew must be held to a strict accounting of his Judaism. Who is to hold him to it?

JOSEFFY (*since they expect an answer*) My friends, you can understand how it has bewildered me to think of separating myself from you. At my age, decisions like these are not easily made. And to you who have been brothers-in-arms, I can only show wounds that are not glorious, and that reflect little credit on one who should try to inspire you.

(*His evident suffering leaves all except Laempfert ill-at-ease*).

LAEMPFERT (*forcibly*) Perhaps we have not shown sufficient solidarity behind you! We may not have given our complete devotion to what you stand for! So while considering ways and means by which you can combat this insidious doctrine, we have debated how to make our relationship more effective. As a result, we are planning to secure for you a committee of representative American Jews for anti-Christian Science work. They will make it possible for you to command pulpits and platforms. We further intend in conjunction with such activities that you have the services of a lecture bureau. It will not be difficult to get the widest co-operation. As a token of our earnestness in the matter, I am empowered to present to

you a check for fifteen thousand dollars, in the name of the Board of Trustees, to be devoted to this work.

*(So saying, he reaches into his pocket and lays a check on the table before Joseffy. The latter is taken aback, and as he stands silently regarding the check, is helplessly buffeted between gratitude for their faith in him and despair at this new obstacle thrust into his path).*

BRENNER (*exulting*) We don't do things by halves!

WALLACH. Even at that, it is only a beginning!

DR. KANTOR. The Scientists would sneer at this check as too material to counteract their sublime nonsense. They don't know the determination that is back of it! They forget that we are a religious people who were monotheists when their ancestors were idol-worshipping savages in the wilds of Europe.

LAEMPFERT (*who has been watching Joseffy*) We shall not stop this campaign until victory is a fact!

JOSEFFY. Charles, how can I meet the spirit in which you have come? If I say Yes, what sure ground is there under my feet to lead Sidonie anywhere? Oh, I must shut out everything else for the time being except her need! My friends, she is worth it! If you could see with me how she drifts further away from us day by day, you would insist that I fight with every ounce of strength to hold her to Judaism! No, I must return to my own problem.

*(A silence of dismay follows. Laempfert turns away abruptly to conceal his chagrin at the defeat).*

BRENNER (*putting out his two long arms, and speaking*

*in a breaking voice)* Doctor, what are we going to tell our women? You know them! The children, too—we are losing our hold on them. If we could say that you were taking a leave of absence—

JOSEFFY (*finally, to save the situation*) Leopold, it has been a growing conviction with me that God, in His inscrutable way, has put this burden on Sidonie that many of us may find ourselves through it. Be patient with me, my friends.

WALLACH. Yes, I've had the feeling that this is a sort of trial for Israel.

BRENNER. A trial for us, yes, but how are we going to take care of it?

JOSEFFY. Leopold, do not be harsh in your judgment, as I am not harsh with Sidonie. Meanwhile, close up your ranks! You have strength. You may be a handful in their midst, but you are, after all, of the Chosen People! Our spiritual domains are unconquerable! Charles, (*he extends the check*) this you can still use effectively!

LAEMPFERT (*taking the check with signal reluctance*) Ephraim, we are not leaving with the idea that our purpose is not going to be fulfilled. We are not ready to entrust your work to less inspired hands. We have made no preparations for that, and we can't see that far.

*(He still expects some last moment concession. Joseffy, unable to proceed further, can only pass a trembling hand along the edge of the table before him. Dr. Kantor interposes).*

DR. KANTOR (*abruptly, with authority*) We are going

to leave you alone. You should be in bed. If you don't mind, I will call back later. You need attention.

WALLACH. That's right! (*He comes forward and extends his hand to Joseffy*) Thanks for the chance to come and talk things over. I'll give orders to let my Jewish help off for Saturday morning services if they want to go. We'll start some real Judaism in this town. (*Joseffy feebly responds to his handshake*).

SHOTTON (*in turn*) You can count on me to do everything in my power. I am still hopeful that there will be a way out.

BRENNER (*in his turn*) Our women go to the synagogue every once in a while. But what is the good? It's only a habit with them, something to atone for their extravagance and amusements. We need you! That's all I can say.

(*Joseffy sits down without making an effort to reply, and helplessly watches the committee file out. Laempfert, however, after stopping at the door to speak to Dr. Kantor, returns. The others take it for granted that it is his place to remain*).

LAEMPFERT (*when Joseffy and he are alone*) Just a word before I go, Ephraim. I have been thinking that if Sidonie realizes the extent of the step you have taken, it may have the opposite effect of what you intend. You cannot risk exciting her. In my opinion it would be wiser if you went along as if nothing was the matter. Is it not possible to arrange this differently?

JOSEFFY (*plunged into the very depths of despair*) No, not even if she takes my resignation as some sort of a Christian Science demonstration. We are dealing with a

child who has the fixed idea that the Messianic age is here, the millenial period when the most extravagant action is quite right. How much there is to be done!

LAEMPFERT. Can you risk deepening that impression by separating yourself from your people? Will you let the idea get abroad that the Christian Scientists have been successful in driving you out of the synagogue?

JOSEFFY (*looking dully at him*) It is strange that you should find this sort of argument, Charles.

LAEMPFERT. Any argument that will make you see all sides of the question! I cannot help telling you before I go, that all this is a terrible blow to me.

JOSEFFY (*somewhat rousing himself*) It is an extreme step, but it is no caprice. Sidonie's stock of health is a very insecure thing, Charles—a mere thread. The hold she has on life is just nervous energy, nothing more. That is the constant spectre. For one thing, I mean to take her to Europe to see the specialists there.

LAEMPFERT (*to whom this is news*) Oh! (*After a pause*) Suppose she refuses to go?

JOSEFFY. I am counting on her making that concession.

LAEMPFERT (*shaking his head at Joseffy's floundering efforts*) If she considers it too big a concession to make, you are left empty-handed. (*Summoning courage for a rebuke*) Ephraim, you should have told her you were going to resign before you did it.

JOSEFFY (*uncertain*) I no longer believe that ordinary ways will do. I have to act intuitively. I know: you think I am irrational. But there are times, Charles, when to do the melodramatic may achieve more than cool calculation. At any rate, I simply can't calculate now. It

was all I could do to keep from going to pieces before you all here. I am trusting to the goodness of God to find my way. I can't do any more. (*He shuts his eyes in utter weariness, then gets back into the seat behind the table*).

LAEMPFERT (*hastily*) You've got to pull yourself together.

JOSEFFY (*as if he had not heard him*) It will all be clear to you later. Then the resignation will not seem so startling. After all, Pittsburgh is a strong Jewish city. Its Jewishness is not all of my making.

LAEMPFERT (*speaking as he walks about, while seeking for another approach to the vexed question uppermost in his thoughts*) I don't know how strong we are. I have a lot of doubts that I didn't have before. A city like New York with nearly a million Jews is less Jewish than when it had a quarter of that number. The Jew apes the Christian. He is indifferent about attending services because his absence from the synagogue creates no comment. Here is Rosenthal leaving Pittsburgh, and instead of everyone looking forward to it with relief, they are praising his legal ability, they talk about his being a kindly character, remember virtues that just happen to be peculiarities—and Christian Science gets the advertising. I tell you, it makes backsliding respectable! It furnishes an easy way out of Judaism for those who would otherwise not find the courage to go over to Christianity. I was hoping that when we were rid of Rosenthal, your path would be easier here.

JOSEFFY (*unmoved by the suggestion*) He has been a divine instrument to chastise us, Charles.

LAEMPFERT (*vigorously*) I don't know what the Lord

meant by Rosenthal, and I am not going to be lenient to that renegade on the chance that the intention was good. The Christian idea of charity may be all right for the failures—they're the sort that started the religion, I suppose. You don't find much of that weak-kneed feeling in modern Christianity, with its strong, successful, level-headed men. I've heard them talk, and I've seen them at work. When they go in for charity and call themselves philanthropists, it's usually with their tongues in their cheeks. They're more natural when they use their fists. They run the churches, and if their churches don't behave, they hit out! I tell you, Ephraim, the Jew can learn with profit how Christianity has made its way. We've got to show our strength!

JOSEFFY (*almost mechanically*) Ours is an especial strength. (*Suddenly conscious that Laempfert is studying him*) What else makes it possible for me every morning after a sleepless night to go about my work as a servant of God?

LAEMPFERT. Ephraim, if you had believed in the gospel of strength, you would, for instance, have known how to use a man like Pollitz. (*As Joseffy seems unequal to the sudden turn of the conversation*) I doubt if he spends any feverish nights, except to consider how to conciliate the Louisville people about Sidonie.

JOSEFFY (*tremulously*) Surely he hasn't been talking!

LAEMPFERT. No. Just the opposite. People are only given the chance to comment on the fact that he is rather silent. Has he been with you any amount of time recently?

JOSEFFY (*as if he would rather not think about it*) He has been very busy going to and from Louisville.

(*Breaking down*) Charles, I can't make out his attitude towards Sidonie. No two normal people in love would act like that. It's too impersonal.

LAEMPFERT. Perhaps they never have been much different, except that you haven't had occasion to notice it. (*Joseffy looks at him wonderingly*). Have you taken him into your confidence lately?—about your resignation, for instance?

JOSEFFY (*relieved to be able to say something with positiveness*) I have only been waiting for him to come back from Louisville. He saved me the trouble of calling him up this morning by calling me up. He is to come in about noon. Our brief talk over the telephone sounded very formal.

LAEMPFERT (*looking at his watch*) I'd like to wait for him, but I can't. It ought to be gratifying to you to know that a number of his trustees are on your side. (*He is ready to go, but stops at the door for a final word*). I have had the thought, Ephraim, that we might call a full meeting of our Board and have Sidonie appear before it.

JOSEFFY (*frightened*) No! No! That's impossible! We daren't revive any trial by a Sanhedrim! It's out of time, out of place! It would have an effect opposite to what you calculated.

LAEMPFERT. Oh, I didn't mean anything like a trial. It was to put before her, with all the solemnity of which we are capable, the seriousness of her change of belief, even to the extent, perhaps, of having some out-of-town ministers present whom you might select.

JOSEFFY. Charles, don't think that I haven't even considered that. But I saw that Sidonie's brief experience with Christian Science had armed her with certain argu-

ments. It would be merely a repetition of the scene at Sydney Rosenthal's.

LAEMPFERT. Yes, and I suppose some of the men would lose their tempers. No, there is no use fighting fanaticism with reason. You see now why I am opposed to your doing anything that is not dictated by cold logic. (*Pleading*) Ephraim, I wish you would give thought to our plan of combating Christian Science with this weapon we have put into your hands! These fifteen thousand dollars can be made a hundred thousand. It would be a fitting climax to your twenty-five years of work. I tell you, if my business were in shape, I'd give up my work and do this myself, handicapped as I am by lack of platform experience! If ever there was a call from above, it is this!

JOSEFFY. If you feel that way, why cannot you see that Sidonie has been given me for some equally important purpose?

(*Laempfert is about to go out, but comes back and holds out his hand, which Joseffy takes.*)

LAEMPFERT. Try to rest up. We can't have you go into the Holy Days feeling as you do.

JOSEFFY (*touched by his solicitude*) After all, there must be some turn for the better soon!

LAEMPFERT. Undoubtedly. Why not look upon our coming in that light?

(*He has let his left hand rest on the table, and when he removes it, the check remains. He goes out quickly.*)

(*Joseffy sits gazing blankly before him. He does not turn when Mrs. Joseffy comes in. She*

*acts very much like a nurse in a sickroom, even with the tendency to tiptoe, and speaks in a lowered voice).*

MRS. JOSEFFY (*tremulously*) Charles said something about your getting a good rest. Please do, Ephraim!

JOSEFFY. In good time. There is a great deal to be attended to. (*He notices the check, and is surprised to see it. As he picks it up*) He couldn't have forgotten it!

MRS. JOSEFFY (*coming to his side and looking at the check*) What is that for? (*Anxiously*) Then they have accepted your resignation!

JOSEFFY. No. They want me to take the platform against Christian Science, and that is to defray the expenses.

MRS. JOSEFFY (*sharply*) Ephraim, don't think of anything now except your health! Everyone is ready to ask you to do things for them. There are always more duties—even though you are not a young man.

JOSEFFY. There is much to be done.

MRS. JOSEFFY (*wincing*) You mean for Sidonie. But neither of you is strong enough to go on like this.

JOSEFFY. It would be an indignity to leave essential things undone for her. If we mean to disregard her, it would be a pretty late time to reshape our purpose in life. Yet these men really came to ask just that, and they seemed to think they had a right to ask it. As far as Sidonie was concerned, they were indifferent.

MRS. JOSEFFY (*hastily*) I don't think they meant that. (*She puts the chairs in order*). She was so much stronger today that she went out—of her own accord.

JOSEFFY. Alone?

MRS. JOSEFFY. She got a taxicab. She said the sunshine would do her good. I—I think she is all right going about that way. She wouldn't hear of my going with her.

JOSEFFY (*tense with anxiety*) Suppose something should happen to her!

MRS. JOSEFFY (*belying her fears*) She is in a city where so many know her.

JOSEFFY (*trying to speak composedly*) Not that I am not grateful for the effort she is making—if she didn't look over the head of our gratitude.

(*Mrs. Joseffy stops in front of him.*)

MRS. JOSEFFY. Do you remember, Ephraim, the battle you fought with yourself years ago as to whether you would go to orthodoxy or stay with reform?

JOSEFFY. But that was all for Judaism! I never debated with myself as to whether I would throw Judaism overboard.

MRS. JOSEFFY (*without spirit*) If one is to keep struggling with one's self, what difference does it make what it's about?

JOSEFFY. Her contradictions will be answered. They must be answered!

MRS. JOSEFFY. Can't we stop thinking of that, Ephraim? Let's just feel that Sidonie isn't a matter of religion.

JOSEFFY (*suspiciously*) Has she been telling you that there is nothing the matter with your heart?

MRS. JOSEFFY (*with a gasp*) I have too much to think of—with the two of you—to bother about myself. Please, Ephraim, don't let your mind jump about like

that! It frightens me. (*At a venture*) I do hope that William won't think that we're acting strangely.

JOSEFFY (*explosively*) Damn William Pollitz! I am sick of his thick-skinned manner! He is just sauntering through this like a spectator!

MRS. JOSEFFY. He is waiting, Ephraim,—like all of us. I think he has been very considerate.

JOSEFFY. If you mean that's why he has been keeping away as much as possible—well, this can't go on. He is coming in shortly. So much the better!

MRS. JOSEFFY. What do you mean when you say it that way? Of course he's going to come in!

JOSEFFY. I've got to see him, to explain my plans about this girl whom he ought to marry at once, if he weren't a dodger! There! You've heard the word! Not that I want him to marry her right away. I'll tell him that I intend to take Sidonie to Europe—and so on. (*He passes his hand over his forehead*). We'll know where we stand.

MRS. JOSEFFY (*desperately*) You make a great mistake. You are hurrying things.

JOSEFFY. There are some kinds of silence that are like thunder. His is a glaring insult. Why has he said nothing to me about my resignation? Because he is watching to see the result! I don't want his comradeship; but I do want the honesty essential to a co-worker. We either are or are not leaders who shape opinion. He—is acting like a petty politician!

MRS. JOSEFFY (*now thoroughly apprehensive*) You must get a hold on yourself! People must not see you giving away! I hope you were feeling all right when Leopold Brenner and the rest of them were here.

JOSEFFY (*with the vanishing storm's final growl of thunder*) It can't last forever, thank God!—or I should utterly break to pieces.

MRS. JOSEFFY. I know.

JOSEFFY (*penitent*) I am sorry, Rose, to give you the idea that I am almost irresponsible.

MRS. JOSEFFY. If only you will remember that each one of us has his own ideas about what has happened.

(*Joseffy is about to flare up again. Instead he goes to the other extreme*).

JOSEFFY. You have been a great help. One at least does not have to speculate about you.

MRS. JOSEFFY (*with a ghost of a smile*) You ought to be very patient, then, with what I am going to ask of you. (*Speaking seriously*) Remember that William has as much right to his worries as you have to yours. You are not to put all sorts of ideas into his head. He may not be thinking anything strange. (*Standing very erect, and speaking forcibly*) Ephraim, you don't understand him any more than you understand Sidonie!

JOSEFFY (*perturbed*) You are excited! You know what that means to your heart! (*He tries to take her hands, but she puts them behind her*).

MRS. JOSEFFY. The way to take care of my heart is by using your head a great deal more than you have. How can it help you to keep turning things over and over —just like a street organ!

JOSEFFY. I didn't think you could be so hard.

MRS. JOSEFFY. You don't have faith, and I do. You should be going right on with your work, as if nothing had happened. William won't disappoint you. He cares

about her, and being so different from her, he will make her happy. None of the other young men could get accustomed to the fact that she was in bad health. Albert Shotton, and the rest of them,—you know they only pitied her. William always had some hope that she would get better. To him she was a remarkable girl. What you call his "salesman's jokes" and "circus stunts" helped her to forget herself. You ought to leave them alone. Maybe he hasn't been so friendly towards you; young rabbis are a little envious. Now that he has a big congregation of his own, you watch what a changed man he will become!

JOSEFFY. Perhaps in a different sense from what you think. He is ridden by ambition as by a nightmare. However, if he is honest in his thoughts about Sidonie, there is no chance of conflict between himself and me.

(*The electric bell of the outside door whirs faintly*).

MRS. JOSEFFY. Remember, if that's him, you're taking care of Sidonie's interests! You're on her side to him! (*As he is silent*) And you mustn't discuss her as if she weren't a Jewess. (*A little wildly*) Ephraim, if we don't take care, we may lose both William and her!

(*There is a knock on the door*).

JOSEFFY. He is in a position to decide for us.

(*Without replying, Mrs. Joseffy opens the door into the hall. Pollitz stands there, looking uneasy*).

POLLITZ. How are you?

MRS. JOSEFFY (*with a gayety which makes her husband stare*) Hello, William! Come in! We were just talking about you. We were sure that knock was yours.

POLLITZ. Ah, yes. (*Irrelevantly*) I don't seem to get a moment for myself.

MRS. JOSEFFY. You're not accustomed to much fuss. Bye and bye, Louisville will be an old story.

POLLITZ (*forcing a smile*) I have found it very exciting. I thought it would be very simple; but packing books and running over to Louisville—it disorganizes one.

MRS. JOSEFFY. Don't let them spoil you over there, William.

POLLITZ. You have always considered me worth spoiling.

MRS. JOSEFFY (*hovering about him*) Do sit down! Sidonie ought to be back any moment.

POLLITZ. She has gone out?

MRS. JOSEFFY. Yes. It's wonderful, isn't it? Thank God! And with such assurance!

POLLITZ (*forcing his interest*) She shouldn't get about without someone being with her.

MRS. JOSEFFY. But she does not want to be treated like an invalid.

JOSEFFY (*who has been walking about restlessly*) Rose, William and I want to have a talk.

MRS. JOSEFFY. Yes! Yes! William, leave room in your trunk for some things I want to give you.

POLLITZ. I shall be grateful to you, whatever it is.

JOSEFFY. See that we're not disturbed, Rose,—even if Sidonie comes back.

MRS. JOSEFFY (*trying to speak lightly*) All right. When you're through, William, come and talk to me. I think you've forgotten how to gossip, you've been so busy.

(*Her laugh, as she goes out, is a dismal failure.*)

POLLITZ (*as though it had suddenly struck him*) It is uncanny how well she has managed with the embarrassments that have arisen about her! No one could have been of greater help to Sidonie—just because she refused to take sides.

(*Joseffy regards him rather sharply. He waits for Pollitz to continue, but the latter looks as if he had thrown out a casual thought which does not need elaboration.*)

JOSEFFY (*without cordiality*) I don't think we have had a talk of any consequence since the day when I told you of Sidonie's interest in Christian Science.

POLLITZ (*with equal lack of friendliness*) I remember I was very urgent about going to Rosenthal. I could not have foreseen the consequences.

JOSEFFY. My resignation, for instance?

POLLITZ. In that I am very much like Pittsburgh as a whole: I refuse to take the resignation as final.

JOSEFFY. We ought to consider how that resignation will affect Sidonie and yourself. I can now tell you that I have severed my connections with my synagogue to devote myself to her—if that will not stand in the way of your plans. I would have consulted you if I had not felt that you would try to dissuade me not to resign. Some impressively important step had to be taken. You could not do so without a setback in your work.

POLLITZ (*as Joseffy pauses*) What is it you want to do for her that should require your resignation?

JOSEFFY (*brusquely*) We will put the deeper import

of it aside for the time being. First of all I will try to get her better medical attention than she has had. I will go to Europe for that purpose. That will also help to remove her from the baneful influence here.

POLLITZ. Have you discussed such a trip with her?

JOSEFFY (*impatiently*) No. I have not even told her about my resignation.

POLLITZ (*astonished*) You haven't! You mean that you are willing to take the risk of her learning the fact from the first passer-by?

JOSEFFY. I didn't expect that she would leave the house alone. In any event, in view of her present state of mind she is not likely to regard it with anxiety.

POLLITZ. I agree with you in that. She may give it no more serious consideration than your suggestion about taking her to Europe.

JOSEFFY. The resignation won't appear quite so trifling.

POLLITZ. A leave of absence would have done just as well.

JOSEFFY. No! An energetic step was necessary to dissipate the anarchy into which we were falling. If staying in the synagogue meant that she would drift out of our reach, then there was only one thing for me to do.

POLLITZ (*less detached*) Oh, undeniably Sidonie is worth making big sacrifices for! I have sought ways and means of untying the tangle myself, only to be baffled. For the time being all I can do is to wish you Godspeed!

JOSEFFY. I realize that if I take Sidonie away for any length of time, it will, of course, leave your immediate plans about her very much at sea.

POLLITZ. Well, my plans will depend entirely on

what Sidonie will decide when you talk matters over with her—and how you talk them over. She is still an invalid.

JOSEFFY. I will be cautious. I learned my lesson at my brother-in-law's.

POLLITZ. Since then he has, wittingly or unwittingly, strengthened his position with her. I think we are too late in whatever we do. Looking back, I would say now that we never had a chance.

JOSEFFY. I have never had that feeling about her. I couldn't think of having it!

POLLITZ. While optimism is my natural tendency, I find it sagging when I see your resignation come on the heels of Sidonie's renewal of health through Christian Science. I can't figure out how you can hope to attain any sort of ascendancy over a religion which has proved its superiority to her. We are mocked by this mingling of virtue and necessity, of a nebulous God and desirable healing, yet you go right ahead.

JOSEFFY. The real test has not been made. The circumstances have not yet favored us. I will be in a better position now.

POLLITZ. Your new efforts will be negligible because she would have to translate them into the language of her religion before she could understand them. How will she look at them? The cold wind that blows from Mrs. Eddy's teaching is chilling all Sidonie's feeling for us. We are but a generalized part of divine Mind. If these people inherit the earth, we shall have saintliness without a pulse-beat. (*As Joseffy turns away*) You can't expect me to suppress my uneasiness about them. I'm not ashamed to say that I am afraid of them! My man-

hood and my Judaism stagger back from this bottomless pit into which one is expected to throw one's individuality. I don't want to have anything to do with them if I can help it!

JOSEFFY. Yet on the brink of this pit stands Sidonie!

POLLITZ. And we with her. Already you have been driven to the decision to give up your work. Two years ago you would have denounced such a step as a wrong to Judaism. What do I face? I am in the process of laying the foundations of a career. I want to counteract in the synagogue the influence of Mr. Worldly Man and Mrs. Fashionable Woman who stroll into it, spoiled by the newspapers reports of sermons by dilettante ministers. I shall strive to replace psuedo-Judaism with sound Judaism. And here I am put on the defensive, right from the start. (*He spreads out his two hands, and talks shrilly*) I can be plain with you. We are two men who ought to be able to face facts without cringing before them. How far has this influence already radiated out into our Jewish community? Where will it stop? Consider your own household. You not only have Sidonie's rejection of Jewish thought, but see how, to save the household from going to pieces, her mother has refused to take sides. That situation will occur in other households. Our religion, which has its roots in unity, cannot maintain its healthy growth. It will begin to shrivel and to die.

JOSEFFY (*aroused by this repetition of a thought which Pollitz had already voiced*) What are you talking about? You know perfectly well that Mrs. Joseffy has avoided taking sides because she does not want to lessen her influence over Sidonie!

POLLITZ. Neutrality?—it is meaningless.

JOSEFFY (*although his anger is weakened by the reasonableness of Pollitz's contention*) Please don't say such things—neither to me nor to anyone else. You and I have striven to get along. But when you charge something akin to lack of loyalty, that in the end means connivance at wrong!—!

POLLITZ. Hold on! You don't know what you are talking about! I am the son of a woman who knew starvation that her son might have opportunity, and I am not likely to say mean things about a mother like Mrs. Joseffy! It's not reflecting on her splendid character to say that in her despair of Sidonie's condition she may have made the sacrifice of shutting her eyes.

JOSEFFY (*violently*) To me that is the same as saying that she abetted what Sidonie did—she who has been such a force for good among my people!

POLLITZ. You can pay no higher tribute than I to her service as a rabbi's wife! I don't think any Jewish community is what it should be if its minister and his wife do not act together to make their spiritual impress on it.

JOSEFFY (*bravely accepting that feature of the issue*) Sidonie shall be a vital force in Louisville. You need have no fear of that!

POLLITZ. A lot of ground will have to be regained if she is to be acceptable to them now.

JOSEFFY (*bristling*) My daughter acceptable to them?

POLLITZ. Then it is evident that you do not know the mischief that has been done by the gossips there. There is no use condemning them. They see their faith attacked, and they are hostile. The only question is whether they

will insist on a public explanation from me as to what has occurred in this household.

JOSEFFY (*proudly*) You forget the respect they have for me.

POLLITZ (*with a bitter laugh*) That implies that at least they have it for you if they haven't it for me. Your resignation won't make my position any the more comfortable.

JOSEFFY. If you will be less timorous, you will have little difficulty either with their respect or understanding.

POLLITZ (*determined*) I believe it will be to the best interests of everyone if you withdraw your resignation.

JOSEFFY. My trustees will have to accept it.

POLLITZ (*as if it were impossible*) You mean to say that you convinced them that you did the right thing?

JOSEFFY. If I have not, I will.

POLLITZ. As practical men, they could only counsel that you let the fire burn itself out.

JOSEFFY. On the contrary. They came to me with a definite proposal of their own.

POLLITZ. About Christian Science?

JOSEFFY. They asked me to use what pulpits I could as well as the lecture platform to talk to Jews about Christian Science.

POLLITZ (*with scorn*) And they call themselves business men! If we are not careful, we are going to give Christian Science a fearful amount of advertising at a heavy cost to ourselves!

JOSEFFY. But for Sidonie's claims on me, I would give immediate consideration to their proposal.

POLLITZ. Only the unfortunate fact that you have

come close to Christian Science could so mislead you as to your duty. Else you would hesitate to make yourself the storm centre for a noisy religious controversy.

JOSEFFY. I am the storm center for one now.

POLLITZ. No. It's only Sidonie who has been in the spotlight. Now the synagogue will be dragged in.

JOSEFFY. And I had thought that you might undertake this work in place of myself! (*Angry enough to watch for the effect of his words*) A large sum of money would go with it, if you should care to consider it.

POLLITZ (*highly interested*) Is that so? They are business men, all right!

JOSEFFY. They are resourceful individuals.

POLLITZ (*back to his former attitude*) But they are being stampeded into hasty action! I am amazed at Laempfert!

JOSEFFY. If this is an absurdity, it is not my predicament that has led them into it.

POLLITZ. Can't they see that we are not fighters in that sense, nor have been for hundreds of years? This small civil war being carried on in our midst by people who have no real influence will prove a tempest in a teapot. The history of Israel doesn't devote many pages to backsliders. (*His antagonism mounts on a higher note*) I've got to speak this way to clear my mind. This spiritual brawl is throwing everything out of focus. My work begins to lack the ring of conviction. I am nervous, anxious, my talk is flat, I look as if I were dodging every issue, not alone this one.

JOSEFFY (*who has been listening with tightened lips and with lowered head*) I cannot reconcile all this with a man of your ability. You surely are not conscious of

any wrongdoing! You can minister to us all, even to me, if you keep a brave outlook.

POLLITZ. I can have no enthusiasm in the matter at all. I have other things to do. I owe something to my own trustees. While yours want to see you fight Christian Science in the open, mine wouldn't want anything of the sort. I have got to create a quiet, constructive atmosphere in Louisville, and be emphatic without being impetuous. They are right! Judaism, after its many centuries of suffering is entitled to quiet.

JOSEFFY. Regarded that way, religion comes dangerously near to serving as an opiate.

POLLITZ. Not in my hands! I will manage to quicken my people while I preach the wisdom of a contented Israel, successful and smiling, going about its work cheerfully. I want to see happy men, women and children —no long faces, no morbidity, no renunciation of the feast that life spreads before us.

JOSEFFY. Take care lest that cost the synagogue too much!

POLLITZ (*with a pitying smile*) You underestimate my strength. I assure you that I will carry through this programme in a way that will make unnecessary the preaching of new crusades. No personal motives shall dictate my relations to my congregation. Religion is like a flame in a lamp you are carrying—you must shield it from the passing wind.

(*Joseffy eyes the younger man for a full moment without speaking*).

JOSEFFY (*icily*) And what would your advice to me be about Sidonie?

POLLITZ (*who has now taken the tone of an equal, and*

*holds it to the end)* Why do you think Sidonie is not going to do exactly as she wishes? That means, then, that you will be driven to this anti-Christian Science campaign. The antagonism will mount. You will find other rabbis lining up against you. I would not be surprised if the Conference took the matter up and decided against this crusade. I shall certainly oppose it in Louisville.

JOSEFFY (*forcing himself to speak composedly*) Let us bring our thoughts back to Sidonie.

POLLITZ. She has never been out of mine in connection with the whole business. The pity of it is that she should now be the focus of all thought reached by the news of your resignation. I tell you, we must forget Christian Science. We must not make it a millstone around our necks!

JOSEFFY. Rather is it like burying one's head in the sand, and calling that doing one's duty.

POLLITZ. I do not seem to be able to convince you that I am honest about my intentions in Louisville. If my life is to be of any use, if I have any message, then the instrument is that pulpit, and my waiting is at an end. (*He puts his aggressiveness aside*) Nothing short of a calamity has befallen us. It is hard to believe that Sidonie, with all her nobility, and her excellent mind, has come so near to driving both of us out of the synagogue, ruining our lifework, and making such an impassable gulf between the two pulpits.

JOSEFFY (*exasperated beyond prudence*) Well, at least she has shown us that such pulpits can have nothing in common.

POLLITZ (*seizing on this*) Whereas her unusual qual-

ties should have done just the opposite! God knows, she never intended when she left the faith to bring this about!

JOSEFFY. You use the phrase "leaving the faith" too easily. I will not use it. I will not accept it as the last word, even if I have to stand alone in my belief in her!

POLLITZ. To Sidonie you and I have become intruders. We live too far away from her because of our Judaism to be necessary to her.

JOSEFFY (*stumbling over the words*) Surely, you are not finally going to Louisville to-morrow with that as your fixed opinion!

POLLITZ (*not faltering*) Since anything we may do is at the risk of her life, I must refuse to be a party to any hasty decision. For that reason I have done no immediate planning that includes her.

JOSEFFY. That, to say the least, is evasive!

POLLITZ. I am not alone in that attitude. I can tell you that Sidonie has carefully avoided discussing our future.

JOSEFFY (*greatly agitated*) That sounds like pure invention! (*He turns away in misery*).

POLLITZ. I am amazed that your affection for her has not given you a clearer comprehension of her position. You ought not to be asking useless sacrifices. She has got to be left alone. I seem to be the only one here who discerns her need and meets it by self-effacement. You are beating your head against a wall. She doesn't want controversy, or advice, or any further statement of our position. Our Judaism must not disturb her, or we may wind up by bringing her to death's door! If that means that we are beaten, then it were time we knew it. I know it!

(*There is no reply. As Joseffy's silence persists, Pollitz accepts it as a dismissal. He walks to the door.*).

POLLITZ (*his hand on the knob*) I wish you as happy a new year as is possible under the heavy load that you you are carrying!

(*Joseffy does not turn, and makes no reply. The door opens and closes. Joseffy goes back to the table, where he stands unsteadily; then he sits down with his hands locked before him.*).

JOSEFFY (*aloud*) It was inevitable.

(*He debates that silently. Finally, when he can no longer balance self-castigation against self-defence, he opens the large, finely-bound Bible at his elbow, and putting on his glasses, turns to a place in the book and begins to read.*).

(*The words at first are inaudible, although his lips move; but soon his voice rises in a chant as he tries to find solace in the Psalms*).

JOSEFFY. “ . . . . I have called upon thee, for thou wilt hear me, O God!” (*His voice falls to a murmur; then rises again*) “ Show me thy marvellous loving-kindness.”

(*His eyes cease seeing the words. Mechanically he raises his glasses to his forehead, and is in debate once more, far from the thoughts which the words have evoked*).

JOSEFFY (*aloud*) What now? What will she say about that?

(*He shakes his head forlornly, and then his strength utterly goes. Desolation and futility rob*

*him of the last vestiges of self-control. His head sinks on his hands, and his despair ends in tears.*

*(There is a tap on the door, which makes him sit up. Hastily wiping his eyes, he drops his glasses back on his nose. Then he walks to the other end of the room to the settle, from which he reaches out to the shelves, and takes the first book on which he lays his hand. With this open on his knee, he hoarsely calls: "Yes?"*

*(Mrs. Joseffy comes in carrying a basket of flowers. As she puts it on the table, she looks in her husband's direction. He is absorbed in the book).*

MRS. JOSEFFY. Mrs. Elenthal sent these, Ephraim, She also sent us two wonderful Japanese vases which I haven't finished unpacking. You know, she doesn't seem quite the same person after her trip to Japan. I think she feels we are limited. (*She takes some of the flowers, and puts them in a vase on the gateleg table beside the fireplace*). I hope she remains in Pittsburgh this winter. I always liked her. (*From time to time she glances in her husband's direction*).

JOSEFFY (*since an answer is expected of him*) She'll get used to Pittsburgh.

*(There is quiet while Mrs. Joseffy moves about nervously).*

MRS. JOSEFFY (*in a constrained voice*) William must have been in a great hurry. He didn't stop to talk to me.

JOSEFFY. He has a great deal to do.

MRS. JOSEFFY. He's not giving us enough time.

JOSEFFY. Too distracted, I suppose.

MRS. JOSEFFY (*with an effort*) You told him about trying to take Sidonie to Europe? Did he approve?

JOSEFFY. He naturally presumes that I will want to do my best by her.

MRS. JOSEFFY. Yes. Yes. He didn't find fault with you?

JOSEFFY. He undoubtedly feels, Rose, that no matter what I do, it will be the injudicious thing.

MRS. JOSEFFY (*after a pause*) But can he do any better for her?

JOSEFFY. He is only thinking of what I am doing, and looks upon me as a meddler in her affairs. He feels she would be better off if left alone.

MRS. JOSEFFY. Yes, I understand that. But that wouldn't satisfy him altogether, would it? What is he going to do instead?

JOSEFFY (*choosing his words carefully*) He has no plans of his own. He thinks it's risky to be making them at this stage.

MRS. JOSEFFY. He is right, in his own way. I think he understands her.

JOSEFFY. Evidently. He took it upon himself to explain her to me.

MRS. JOSEFFY (*hastily*) It's her condition he is so anxious about. He couldn't have meant anything else, Ephraim, no matter what he said.

JOSEFFY. I admit his position isn't an easy one. His responsibilities call for a certain line of conduct.

MRS. JOSEFFY. He will do very well in Louisville.

JOSEFFY. As a matter of fact, he feels that he will do better there than I have done here.

MRS. JOSEFFY (*with an attempt at lightness*) Nonsense, Ephraim!

JOSEFFY. Not at all. I believe he has the idea that the current has turned against me, and that my position is no longer what it was.

MRS. JOSEFFY (*trying to speak steadily*) What could he have said?

JOSEFFY. He doesn't approve of matters at all.

MRS. JOSEFFY (*coming to a stop before him*) What does he want of you?

JOSEFFY. He thinks the damage has already been done. For himself he asks nothing but to be left in peace to do his work in Louisville.

MRS. JOSEFFY. Yes, but he can't be everlastingly thinking only of his own affairs!

JOSEFFY (*not looking at her*) He is actuated by caution, rather than by courage, now that his little store of courage seems badly used up. We have taken too much for granted, Rose. We thought we were reliving our romance in Sidonie and him. I am afraid there was nothing vital to tie them to each other, and Sidonie's Christian Science seems to have raised insurmountable obstacles.

MRS. JOSEFFY (*beginning to grasp the import of his words*) A man in his position doesn't do things that way!

(*Joseffy sees that she is unsteady on her feet, and reaching out quickly, seats her beside himself.*)

JOSEFFY (*trying not to show how frightened he is*) Now! Now! You mustn't feel like that! It's going to come out all right! Be grateful that she is getting better and is with us! It's all in God's hands. You must have faith, Rose!—you who understand her more than I do!

MRS. JOSEFFY (*slowly recovering her breath*) I am all right! Keep talking to me. Don't stop!

JOSEFFY (*at a loss*) Yes! Yes! We shouldn't make William Pollitz more important to us than Sidonie. If we had possessed foresight, we wouldn't have let him surprise us by such a stand. Like most of us, he moves with the stream. But right now I want you to remember your heart, because you have got to use it for many years for Sidonie and me.

MRS. JOSEFFY. But why did you let him go so quickly? Don't you understand that he is prepared to do just as he likes?

JOSEFFY. My dear, you wouldn't have asked him to stay if you had seen how he squirmed. Your respect for him would have died on the spot!

MRS. JOSEFFY. But you wanted to see him—

JOSEFFY. Only because he had been expecting that we would have to come to this talk. It was a mutual obligation which had to be discharged.

MRS. JOSEFFY. You may have misunderstood him. You two have never been fair to each other!

JOSEFFY (*firmly*) Rose, neither you nor I have made a practice of keeping people in false relation to ourselves. There is no reason why we should act differently in his case.

MRS. JOSEFFY (*grieving*) Can't you see it was you he was impatient with, not Sidonie? He may feel that you have acted hastily about your resignation—

JOSEFFY (*wounded*) Ah, dear, don't make it harder for me! (*He puts his shoulders back*) I have not acted hastily, nor like a coward. Those who want to hide away,

or turn tail at the first public criticism, can leave me and Sidonie to our own devices. We can manage it!

MRS. JOSEFFY (*realizing his hurt*) You have acted honestly. But now you must prepare Sidonie about him, in case he leaves the city without seeing her. No! No! It won't be necessary! Please God, he will be ashamed of himself! He will be sorry for everything. He will see her. They will be happy yet, Ephraim. She will never be ungrateful to us for all we have done for her. (*As he does not reply*) Why should she?—she loves us, Ephraim!

JOSEFFY. I don't know whether she is getting far away from us because our outlook, according to her standards, is too temporal, or because we are Jews.

MRS. JOSEFFY (*blazing into anger*) Could William have said worse! Oh, I have always thought that ministers didn't understand women! I should have spoken to William!

JOSEFFY. You are making very clear to me, Rose, that I ought also to be thinking of your spiritual problems. You have begun to take sides. Your duty is clear. (*Insistently*) If you have any hope of Sidonie ever being the wife of any Jew, you have got to see it as I see it!

(*There is a knock on the door to the right. In the tensity of the situation it sounds unnaturally loud. Mrs. Joseffy is about to get up, but her husband gently restrains her.*)

JOSEFFY. I will open it.

MRS. JOSEFFY. I think you should be left alone this morning.

JOSEFFY. No, let them come. My people still believe

I can do things for them. (*Almost bitterly*) I must be as eager for the round of duties as when no thought of leaving them ever entered my head.

(*Mrs. Joseffy is ready to cry, but saves herself from breaking down. Joseffy opens the door to find Sidonie standing there in street attire. She kisses him, and comes in. Her steps are unsteady as she walks towards her mother*).

SIDONIE. Oh, it's just the two of you, mommy!

MRS. JOSEFFY. What color you have, dear! (*As Sidonie bends down to kiss her, she feels her forehead*). Yet you're cool. It's wonderful, Ephraim!

JOSEFFY. It is very encouraging.

SIDONIE (*sitting down beside her mother*) Ah, mommy, now a long pull all together in believing that, and we're at the end of the road.

JOSEFFY. You shall be well!

SIDONIE (*trying to speak calmly*) Good, daddy! When you say it that way, then I am sure!

JOSEFFY (*trying to smile bravely*) When you feel a little surer, we must spend more time together.

SIDONIE. My beautiful daddy! You have been so patient during these last days with me, that I have been thrilled with gratitude. I know just what it has meant to you to stand back and watch. With your vision, everything is possible. William has been much more difficult. I know you will help him. (*Joseffy can only remain silent*). I have been reading some of your last year's sermons. There is a spiritual spaciousness in them that has been like a revelation to me.

MRS. JOSEFFY. Sidonie, you and your father both

ought to stop talking, and learn to play a little. Your seriousness is—like a weight!

SIDONIE. There you go, mommy—figuratively hiding under the table! My peace of mind now demands openness, like an open field, rather than a shut-up room. I want daddy to feel that way, to take pleasure in the thoughts others think as they seek.

JOSEFFY. You haven't been exciting yourself by visiting people while you were out?

SIDONIE. I saw only one person. That was Uncle Sydney. I realized when I talked to him how unfortunate it was that when you and I were there, others were there, too.

JOSEFFY. I suppose we all did the best we could.

SIDONIE. A step at a time, dad. We must be prepared now to take the next one.

JOSEFFY (*as she pauses*) You mean that I should go to see your uncle again?

SIDONIE (*her facing shining*) O you wonderful man! Did you hear that, mommy? No, daddy dear; for this time it is Uncle Sydney who comes to you. He is outside there now, waiting. Just think! He's here!

JOSEFFY (*astounded, his voice barely audible*) What for?

SIDONIE. To see you! No hesitancy; just put on his hat, called his car— (*catches sight of her father's dismayed expression*) Why, what is the matter?

JOSEFFY (*turning away*) I—am not prepared.

MRS. JOSEFFY (*quickly*) Ephraim, Sydney is going to leave Pittsburgh. You may never see him again.

JOSEFFY (*trying to spare Sidonie*) You don't know what a difficult time we had at his office. Things like that

shouldn't occur, particularly in my own home, where I am at a disadvantage.

SIDONIE. Dad, you have always prided yourself on the fact that this house was open to every man, woman and child in Pittsburgh.

JOSEFFY. They do not come to deny convictions I hold.

SIDONIE (*pleadingly*) Dad, I would be deeply grieved if you sent him away.

JOSEFFY. Very well; then I shall see him.

(*Sidonie gets up, and going over to him, puts her arms about his neck*).

SIDONIE. You and I have been living so unnaturally! Mommy is right. We are not going to let things get to the breaking point any more!

(*She kisses him. As if from habit, she takes off his glasses, and tucks them into his coat-pocket. Then she goes out to call her uncle*).

JOSEFFY (*utterly undone*) How can anyone hope to make any sort of lucid explanation to her of William Pollitz's conduct? What of the Sidonie that we knew is left to us? And now I am to meet Sydney Rosenthal!

MRS. JOSEFFY (*with sudden spirit*) You are as big a man as he! You will know what to tell him!

JOSEFFY (*with a surge of confidence*) A bigger man than he, I hope!

(*Rosenthal and Sidonie come in. Rosenthal is abrupt, aggressive, impatient*).

ROSENTHAL (*to Joseffy—curtly*) How are you? (*To his sister*) Rose, I would be very grateful if you would take Sidonie out on the porch.

MRS. JOSEFFY (*astonished*) Why? (*As he does not answer*) It would be so much better, Sydney, if we all sat down together as in the old days. (*Finding that this makes no impression*) Or if you wish, Sidonie can go up to her room and rest.

ROSENTHAL (*relentlessly*) No, Rose. You will have to take me on faith.

MRS. JOSEFFY (*stiffening*) People so stubborn—

JOSEFFY (*interposing*) I see no reason why you should not stay, Rose, if you want to.

ROSENTHAL (*to Joseffy*) As you please. Though it would be a kindness to both you and me if I could have my way.

(*Joseffy gets as far away from him as possible and turns his back on him*).

SIDONIE. Mother, the love that actuates uncle put me on my feet. Be sure that he is a bearer of glad tidings!

MRS. JOSEFFY (*to her husband, who is now pacing the room*) Perhaps Sydney's way doesn't mean any argument or bad feeling. You know what you said a minute ago. You will know what to do. (*Turning to Sidonie*) Mrs. Elenthal brought you some beautiful Japanese prints. Until your uncle is through, it will give us something to look at.

(*This offer of interest outside the room does not immediately reach Sidonie, who has shut her eyes, and stands very erect, her lips visibly moving as if in prayer. When she feels her mother's hand on her arm, she follows her out*).

ROSENTHAL (*his hands on the back of a chair, leaning towards his brother-in-law*) Ephraim, I was astounded to find that Sidonie was ignorant of your resignation.

It was pure chance that she should have come to me first on leaving this house. The whole thing now looks more mysterious to me than ever. Do you mind telling me why you resigned?

JOSEFFY (*angrily*) I see no reason for discussing it with you before I find Sidonie sufficiently well to go into the matter with her.

ROSENTHAL. I see plenty of reason. I am a poor enough Scientist to believe that the shock of learning of it may do her harm.

JOSEFFY (*caustically*) Then may I reassure you on that point? I will be very careful in my talk with her.

ROSENTHAL. But can't you see the impossible situation, and why it won't straighten out? That, too, after what she has gone through! (*As Joseffy makes no reply*) Then I may as well tell you that I came because I thought you had gotten beyond your depth and needed help.

JOSEFFY. And you come to advise?—or to threaten?

ROSENTHAL. To advise. The threat seems to be entirely on your own side. I take it for granted that you have not resigned to publicly voice your disapproval of what Sidonie has done. So you must have taken the step because you believed that in some inexplicable way it would benefit her.

JOSEFFY. The interpretation is purely meddlesome.

ROSENTHAL. I am hoping, however, that you have not taken it upon yourself to go to work over Sidonie as surgeons work over some desperate case, taking chances they would not normally take.

JOSEFFY (*with disdain*) That is in keeping with the rest of what you have been saying. But you are correct

in one thing—the case is desperate with the pressure that is being brought to bear on her.

ROSENTHAL. I would feel that I had left Pittsburgh with a vital task unaccomplished if I did not talk plainly to you. Until Sidonie turned to Science, no one had the courage to oppose you. I am not speaking for myself, for when a man at my age changes his point of view on religion, he has ceased to care about what people will say. This child, like the child in Hans Christian Andersen's tale who cried out that the deceived king had no garments on, has spoken out about Judaism. If your religion cannot stand the test, and this child must find you eternally trying to set her right, there is only one thing to do.

JOSEFFY. All of which can only mean that your influence and dictation are to be paramount. Since you are so confident about it, what are your terms?

ROSENTHAL (*losing his temper*) Now you are bullying me! (*His anger passes as quickly as it came*). There will be the end to that for everybody today, at any rate. No, I am not here to dictate terms. But I think that someone ought to find out how far you are going to go with Sidonie, and if you are overstepping your rights, to tell you to stop. If you could put reason above passion there is no one right now you could turn to who is in a better position to advise you than I.

JOSEFFY (*his tone freighted with contempt and aversion*) I have no objection to telling you what I intend to do. My first step will be to ask Sidonie to go to Europe with me.

ROSENTHAL (*at once*) Change of scene—certainly! But she oughtn't to go on top of your resignation. If she

goes with you, her understanding should be that you have had a leave of absence. And under no circumstances is she to be asked to receive medical attention. Not that I believe that you would drag her to Europe to turn her over to physicians, since you didn't call them in during the past two weeks.

JOSEFFY (*outraged*) I wonder if you hear what you say and how you say it!

ROSENTHAL. I presume it doesn't sound pleasant, nor conciliatory. But for this brawling atmosphere I might act and speak less hostilely. It is necessary, however, to get you back to earth.

JOSEFFY. If your "reality," as you call it, can be satisfied with picturing Sidonie as antagonistic to what I want to do, and in trying to make a breach in our affection, then it is my right to counter your influence. I have not broached to her the question of going, but I am sure that she will consider it patiently.

ROSENTHAL (*less vehement*) Ephraim, I cannot believe that you grasp what has taken place in Sidonie's thinking, otherwise you would not go ahead with such confidence.

JOSEFFY. Sidonie's thinking is a mass of conflicting words, phrases, illusions!

ROSENTHAL. To win against her spiritual experience, you count on ancestor worship, pure and simple.

JOSEFFY. That is but the lawyer's trick of forcing an appearance of guilt upon the man he is attacking. Sidonie's freedom of judgment for which you have become a special pleader has been in abeyance since she began seeing through Mary Baker Eddy's eyes. She can no more think her own thoughts now than you can.

ROSENTHAL. It seems a relief to her after the time she spent reading the ancient lesson of despair.

JOSEFFY. I the destroyer; you the resurrection and the life!

ROSENTHAL (*bitterly*) It was a long time before I had the courage to be anything.

JOSEFFY. I wonder, after the way she went to pieces that day in your office, whether you really think you are more than experimenting!

ROSENTHAL. So I did experiment!—by waiting while she dragged herself along in that nightmare of hers. The waiting was not Christian Science! I cannot understand how I had the patience. Just stop and think! Be fair! I, who was certain that the key to her health was mental, had to conceal that knowledge from her as if it were criminal! I had to watch her being prepared for the shroud, while you carried on the fiction that it was to be a wedding garment! I was doubly a coward, for I held off through nothing but squeamishness. When she occasionally came to see me, and would curl herself up helplessly on the couch, I would talk to her about trifles. Think of the mockery of that! That is nothing to my absurdity when I first heard that you had resigned. For a moment I thought that you were willing to let her go on, and by your resignation challenged the criticism of your community. It would have been magnificent—but it isn't done, I suppose.

JOSEFFY. Lest you misunderstand, let me say once and for all that if it is in my power, there shall be no Christianity for Sidonie!

ROSENTHAL. And so, because you are obsessed with the desire to save Judaism for Jews, or Jews for Judaism

—I don't know which—you would have her back where she was last winter!

JOSEFFY. You are grovelling in the dust of fear! In that you forecast what will come with the collapse of Eddyism as a gospel of salvation. That is what I have to look out for in Sidonie's case—that when this physical quickening which has followed on the intoxication from Mrs. Eddy's words passes away, the reaction may not be too terrible. She has not considered that. She is beginning to be out of reach of commonsense thinking. Why, she has not even thought it possible that she might lose William Pollitz in this confusion!

ROSENTHAL. Would that be his fault, or hers?

JOSEFFY. How can she ever go into his synagogue, and feel herself an integral part of it? You know better!

ROSENTHAL. That matters least. Her mental adjustment matters most. Of course she is chancing the future, as thousands before her have done in the quest for truth. It is cowardly to put a hopeless construction on that. As for the past that you want her to conserve, the dead weight of it will fall away no matter by what artifice you may want to tie it to her.

JOSEFFY. We shall see—if you play fair.

ROSENTHAL. No, not so fair that I shall willingly see you sell Sidonie's soul for a mess of pottage. You intend to make her conform; that's plain! I deny your right to do it. I insist that there is only one way in which she can now get out of her mental turmoil, and that is to live away from those who accept it as part and parcel of their existence. She has to begin by shaking the dust of Pittsburgh from her feet. She must take

up her life among people who by their sympathetic understanding of her needs will help to continue her healing. I suggest that since I am going to Boston, Sidonie go there with her mother for a prolonged stay—and not to Europe, or anywhere else.

JOSEFFY (*caught unawares*) This is criminal!

ROSENTHAL. If I appear to be a criminal, it is because your judgment has gone astray.

JOSEFFY (*trembling as he speaks*) Do you realize that if she listened to you and went, she would never be able to come back?

ROSENTHAL. You mean her physical self? For the rest, you know she is beyond your reach already. You would be mad, however, if by some reckless attitude you threw away the boundless affection she has for you.

JOSEFFY (*shaking with passion*) Sydney Rosenthal, I warn you to desist! You have the vileness of a sniveling, soul-snatching priest! How dare you approach me with a proposition like that? How dare you thrust between Sidonie and me this decayed creed which has been warmed over for people like you? (*He strides over to the door, as if to call in the others; but before reaching it, swings about, and going to Rosenthal, seizes his arm forcibly*). You shameless person, you take yourself out of my house, or I'll throw you out !

ROSENTHAL (*going to the chair where he has put his hat and overcoat, and taking them up*) All right, Ephraim. If that is all you can find to say to me, then the end is very near anyway. I thought I might bring you escape from lip service. But in the end it is the undoing of most ministers. To you who belittle our metaphysics I say that the wisest thing you can do in

this crisis is to get out of Pittsburgh and go to Boston yourself, if you are not to be reckoned a closed chapter in the spiritual life of America.

JOSEFFY (*his anger waning, and desolation taking its place*) You come to tell me that you would bury her among non-Jews, that you are willing to watch her come closer to these strangers to Judaism, while Rose and I would be losing her, practically as if she had entered a convent.

ROSENTHAL (*his own anger giving away*) Take a look at the other side of the picture. Suppose that in a few years your own life should close. If sick, Sidonie would have to go on for years with nothing to alleviate her misery. Could anything be more terrifying? Haven't you enough imagination to see her moving out of girlhood into middle-age, a burden to others, a sorrow to herself? That is the deadly alternative you offer. We get so accustomed to sick people that we cease to project them into the future. But if Sidonie is going to accept material concepts, that future is inescapable for her.

JOSEFFY. I have asked you to consider what it will mean if she is not healed by your creed, and in the end cannot even find sufficient faith to come back to the Jewish world from which she sprung.

ROSENTHAL. What if she does not come back? You are thinking only of Judaism, as if the alternative were annihilation. God has given Sidonie understanding beyond the ordinary. She was bound to doubt Judaism. There is doubt of it in many quarters, except that you have not made yourself aware of it, because in all your years of ministering to your people, none brought you their misgivings about their faith. That very fact should

make you pause before you fly out in attack on another faith. It is time that the leaders of Israel themselves began a little outspoken questioning on their own account. When they do, they will, for one thing, admit the possibility that Christianity can be a belief in one God. They will also discover that a Christian Scientist is not necessarily one of the many idol-worshipping Christians. (*With finality*) I don't expect to see you for a long time, and my parting word is that you debate with lack of bias the step you have taken and the one you are about to take. Sidonie is entitled to her healing. If you persist in getting in her way she will rise in bitter revolt against you. She will tear the image of you out of her heart! All that depends upon you. You can save or you can destroy. You can be with God, or against Him. I am putting Sidonie back in your hands for decision.

(*He is ready to go*).

JOSEFFY. You can stay long enough to put the question to her yourself.

ROSENTHAL. No, I won't stay. If I put my side, I must put yours; and then the atmosphere once more becomes full of discord. This wrangling hasn't added stature to my spirit. I must believe that Sidonie will find her way past all interference. (*He turns at the door for a last word*). I say "Good bye" without any expectation that you will get over your horror of what you call my "apostacy," from which your distrust of me really springs. I had believed that only ungodly men used that word to whip up the prejudices of their fellows. You have much to atone for. (*He goes out*).

(*Joseffy stands motionless with his back to the*

*table. He makes a hard effort to grope his way out of his confusion, and succeeds in becoming more composed.*

*(Sidonie comes in without her mother. She looks at her father lovingly and with a certain curiosity, and without speaking sits down in a chair near the fireplace. Her attitude is one of expectancy).*

JOSEFFY (*accidentally knocking a book from the table to the floor, and stooping to pick it up*) Your uncle came here with a suggestion which concerns you, and which he has asked me to put to you.

*(Mrs. Joseffy enters quickly, looks with fear from one to the other, and finds her way to the settle).*

JOSEFFY (*who has paused to choose his words*) Your uncle thinks that since he is going to Boston, it would be well for you and your mother also to go there.

SIDONIE (*mechanically*) Boston! (*She repeats the word under her breath*).

JOSEFFY (*keeping himself in hand*) He undoubtedly believes that the Christian Science environment which that city provides will be better for you than the half-Christian Scientist, half-Jewish life you now lead. His idea is that you should cut with the past, and put behind you disturbing Jewish influences.

SIDONIE. The uncertainty has been very hard for me, dad.

JOSEFFY (*as if reciting a well-learned lesson*) Your uncle evidently does expect that your uncertainty will end with your going to Boston.

SIDONIE. You want me not to make any decision just now, daddy?

JOSEFFY. Will you put it off?—and instead go to Europe with me?—for a year, let us say.

SIDONIE. How could your congregation spare you?  
*(As he does not at once answer)* You do need a long leave of absence to get a good rest.

JOSEFFY (*his face lighting up*) Yes! Yes! We would take things leisurely, then, couldn't we?

SIDONIE. I am not so keen about Europe, daddy. I prefer a quieter place. (*Thoughtfully*) Perhaps it's my fear of Europe. I couldn't help thinking of the time when you believed that the physicians there should see me, and Dr. Kantor dissuaded you because he thought they might go to extremes. When you said Europe, I had a picture of a surgeon in his apron standing over me. (*She laughs*) I am still easily frightened.

JOSEFFY. Dr. Kantor, in insisting on the high position of America in medicine, was somewhat unfair to Europe. They are not extreme over there. It would not at all be amiss for us to see some of the specialists—for advice only, of course.

SIDONIE (*surprised, but not antagonistic*) See them for me? (*After a pause*) No, dad!

JOSEFFY. I hoped that you might—for my sake—  
*(He stops abruptly, unable to find words to go on).*

SIDONIE (*greatly moved*) If you are going to ask for a leave of absence, just to satisfy yourself by having physicians see how much stronger I am, why, I will go with you, daddy. But you know, I can't follow their advice, or take their medicines. You'd rather I told you that now, wouldn't you?

JOSEFFY (*courageously*) You mean, it would be repugnant to you to see them?

SIDONIE. Dad, there is nothing in Europe that can bring the perfect healing I want. To take the journey for just that purpose and get you away from your work, would be a cruel waste of your time. In the end it wouldn't make you happy.

JOSEFFY. Suppose I am willing to chance it?

SIDONIE (*roused*) To find you there asking—demanding—that I see those physicians would give me a feeling about you, dad,—well, I can't quite explain it. I do want you to remain aloof, up above the annoying things, refusing to be bothered with them. It may be mere sentiment to want to have you my ideal figure always, but I can't help that. I can't forget the hours we spent over the Bible, and over our Hebrew lessons, and the reading we did in Hebrew literature, and how when I was sick and dismal, you would dwell on the struggles of those who, despite physical handicaps, went forward. I feel as if I have broken bread many times with the heroes you and I cared so much about!

JOSEFFY. It was a mistake for us not to have gone to the New Testament as well. There the characters stand out in a peculiarly mystical light, and one has to preserve the critical attitude.

SIDONIE (*unable to hide her satisfaction that he has brought up the point*) I'm sorry we didn't. Although our understanding at the time would have merely shown us Jesus and the apostles as viewed by the material Christian church. Just as I was unable to draw proper conclusions from the Old Testament.

JOSEFFY (*quivering like a tree under the stroke of an*

*axe)* Don't be so sure, Sidonie! You are at variance with the best minds of all times!

SIDONIE. What minds, dad?—The sort we are likely to find when we go to Europe to hunt up physicians? They are keen enough, but do they do more than just swim on the surface?

JOSEFFY (*desperately*) Very well; if you wish, we will not see any physicians. We will jog along comfortably along the Mediterranean. And when you are stronger, we will go into the Holy Lands, and finish our holiday there.

SIDONIE (*growing more anxious, and at the same time more assertive*) The Holy Land, dad, is rich in associations for those who stress the material Moses and the material Jesus, and the material places where they preached and moved. The reality for which they stood is as much here as it is there—possibly more so, for it is not confused by false emotion. I know that if we went, and I expressed thoughts like that, it would make you very impatient, and I wouldn't want to risk losing one bit of our loving thought for one another.

JOSEFFY (*proudly*) You are mistaken! Anywhere and everywhere I can be a tower of strength to you!

SIDONIE. Be that now, dad, when I need it so much!

JOSEFFY. Not in the way you mean! I cannot—any more than those of our race who suffered and died in the indescribable hells created by Christian domination of Europe. These martyrs of ours are your example—and your lesson.

SIDONIE. They suffered and died, dad, that I might be free to choose. If they stood here, what would you ask them to say to me?

JOSEFFY. (*excitedly*) Do you think they would condone your talking as if Judaism had become merely an historical incident?—you, the daughter of one who has the status of a Levite!

SIDONIE. But if Judaism can no longer serve me?—if it seems to bar the way?

JOSEFFY (*with a wild fling of his arm*) Are you not going to give a thought to others? Don't you understand how this affects William Pollitz?

SIDONIE (*slowly*) I have been trying to see what William and I are going to do about each other. I feel that when the time comes, he will not be found utterly wanting. I had been hoping, dad, that between the two of you, I would come into my own. Billy has never been as hostile as you are at this moment—

MRS. JOSEFFY (*breaking in hysterically*) Are you going to compare your father with that hypocrite who isn't worthy to tie your father's shoestrings?

SIDONIE (*aghast*) Mother!

JOSEFFY (*loudly*) No! No! Neither of you knows what you're saying! You are frightening each other needlessly! (*Coming forward so as to be between the two, to command their attention*) Rose, things are not so serious!—

(*Mrs. Joseffy bursts into tears. Sidonie gets up quickly, and goes to her mother, sits down beside her, and while she talks, fondles her*).

SIDONIE (*softly*) It's all right, mommy. I didn't want to see it, else I would have known long before you spoke. This is all part of the lesson I had to learn. It had to be. There is nothing terrible in the words, "The Lord

hath given, and the Lord hath taken away," for that is followed by, "Blessed be the name of the Lord." He hath given me of understanding, and taken away my error.

MRS. JOSEFFY (*through her tears—astounded*) And is that all you can say about William!

SIDONIE. A year ago, the idea of his not being at my side at a time like this would have made a coward of me. Now, whatever Billy may think or may do, he can only reveal the truth.

JOSEFFY (*revolted*) This symbol of truth may have only been interested in saving his own skin.

SIDONIE (*like a chant*) I must see no evil in him. Any disappointment I may feel will but limit my comprehension of God as Good.

JOSEFFY. This is beyond my comprehension! To resign so easily what has been so necessary to you until now! It is but another self-inflicted wrong!

MRS. JOSEFFY. Ephraim, be grateful!

JOSEFFY (*who has not heard her—to Sidonie*) Don't make the mistake of interpreting William Pollitz's conduct as being that of a Jew!

SIDONIE. Dad, his unkindness does not do him justice. I am coming more and more to see in all of you beauty of purpose that is amazingly wonderful. There is no spirit of resignation in the way I am accepting William's decision. I know that it is a demonstration in answer to my necessity. (*Ecstatically, putting out her arms*) Dad, it is a new Sidonie who speaks to you. Through me you can understand the words, "He has risen!" For even I am of the texture of God, and there is not one iota of me that is not divine! Truly have I risen! I declare that my

old, false self is no more! And I am grateful for all the steps that have made this possible—your visit to Uncle Sydney, his visit here, William's putting his house in order, your determination to find where I stood!

JOSEFFY (*thoroughly demoralized*) "Risen"?—Out of the gaberdine to Christian respectability?—

MRS. JOSEFFY. Ephraim, she doesn't mean it in that sense!

JOSEFFY (*his discretion gone*) Those who left the *Judenstrasse* may not have had the excuse of seeking physical well-being, but they never came back!

MRS. JOSEFFY (*wringing her hands*) You do not know what you are saying!

SIDONIE (*with a quietness which belies her blazing eyes*) Dad is right about my not coming back, mommy. I can never live again with any earth-bound creed. I will not let myself come into the shadow of a belief which, while insisting that I have been made in the image of God, insists at the same time that I am predestined for death!

(*Joseffy's drooping figure straightens. He becomes stern, haughty, superior. Indecision falls away from him. He needs only the praying shawl to appear ready to enter upon some religious ceremonial*).

JOSEFFY (*solemnly*) My work is now made clear. As you stand there, Sidonie, trying to prove to me that the straight line which represents my past life leads nowhere, I realize that I have put personal ends above duty. There were times of late when I felt that the world would mock me and call my work a failure because of what you had

done. I reasoned falsely: I lacked proper regard for what I had accomplished. Like many who steep themselves in religious work, I have lived as a whole out of contact with reality. See how in my anxiety I have almost lost sight of my vocation!

MRS. JOSEFFY (*as if to remind him that she, his wife, is also listening*) Sidonie respects you for what you are. So does everybody else!

JOSEFFY. I do not know. Perhaps if I had been a seeker after praise, I would be more certain. But I am a plain man, one fully conscious of his failings. (*Fervently*) But I do know when the time has arrived to battle for my convictions! And Israel must put on its armor! The fact that this incident has almost wiped out my usefulness and made me irresolute, vacillating, should be a warning to me. No more shifting from foot to foot! No further apologies! I am a Jew! And we Jews have our rallying cry. If you will remember, Sidonie, at one time you too said, with belief in your heart, "Hear O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord He is one! *Shema Yisroel, Adonai Eloheinu, Adonai Echod!*"

(He turns to leave the room).

MRS. JOSEFFY (*as Sidonie stands motionless, giving no sign of what she feels*) Ephraim, don't you see that she will go away?

JOSEFFY (*turning at the door*) Yes. I can't do anything. All I can hope for is that in return for our years of love, she will not in the end reject us altogether.

MRS. JOSEFFY. Sidonie, you mustn't let him carry away any such idea!

SIDONIE. Of course he won't! How could he? (*She goes over to her father, and reaches out her hands for*

his, which he gives her. Her voice breaks again and again as she struggles with her tears). You are my big daddy, whom I utterly love and adore. No matter what your silly theories may be about my affection, it won't make the slightest difference. And I shall always hold your hand wherever I go, for I will be seeing you, not as differing with me, but only as you have been in your patience and goodness, so very, very long.

JOSEFFY (*who is suffering intensely*) I am not going to ask anything for myself. Whatever plans you make, your mother should be first in your thoughts. She cannot bear anxiety. Make matters as easy for her as you can. As for me—I shall manage.

(*He kisses her and goes out.*

(*Sidonie stands for some time looking at the door which has shut behind him. Her mother has remained on the settle, a bowed little figure, with her arms hanging limply at her sides.*)

SIDONIE (*turning about*) I couldn't do otherwise, mother.

MRS. JOSEFFY (*stonily*) And now, if you go to Boston, your father will feel free to do that foolish thing.

SIDONIE. What do you mean?

MRS. JSEFFY. His trustees have asked him to take up regular lecture work against Christian Science.

SIDONIE (*bewildered*) They dared to ask him that?

MRS. JOSEFFY. He hadn't decided before your uncle came. He can't do otherwise now.

SIDONIE. How bitter! How useless! (*On second thought*) Yet why not? God works in devious ways.

Who can tell but that the restatement of the Jewish position may open doors long closed to truth?

MRS. JOSEFFY (*her Judaism up in arms*) You say that so easily!—as if Judaism isn't older than Christianity! (*With a sigh*) You are stubborn—like your father. (*Averting her head*) When he thinks this over, he will feel that I have had a lot to do with your going.

SIDONIE. We've got to trust the future, mother, or there can be no escape from wretchedness.

MRS. JOSEFFY. Oh, I suppose you are right to think of your health, and not to mind my prejudices. They can't help you. I am a foolish old woman. Trouble doesn't make me any wiser.

SIDONIE (*slowly*) Yes, my health. (*With a shiver*) I couldn't go through such awful years again! No more!—

MRS. JOSEFFY. No! No more! That's what I felt when I got you to write from Frankfort for that book! You shall not be crossed in anything any more! If you wish, I shall never speak to you again about William.

SIDONIE. I know. (*Thoughtfully*) I would seem to live to some purpose to you if I married, wouldn't I?

MRS. JOSEFFY (*simply*) Yes.

SIDONIE (*suddenly*) Mother, you are coming to Boston with me, and you will stay all winter!

MRS. JOSEFFY (*frightened*) You mustn't put it like that!

SIDONIE. Yes, it is of you I am thinking. You are entitled to carry a smiling face. Here, if you come back after a short stay, and I am away, you will always be locked in with your unrest, like some poor beastie in a cage. In Boston you will be out of reach of all the discussions about me. You will lose your fear about your

heart. Physicians will be merely some unpleasant dream out of which you have awakened.

MRS. JOSEFFY (*hopelessly*) As if I cared about my heart! Just think of a woman at my age with her home falling to pieces! My heart must work long enough to let me help both you and your father in your stubbornness.

SIDONIE. You know that during the Holy Days, as you sit before the pulpit during the long services, your thoughts will be divided between your prayers and me. For I have made up my mind that I shall not stay here until then, mother. (*The figure on the settle becomes more crumpled*). If you are to go, dad would certainly prefer that you went before the Holy Days with me, for your sake as well as mine.

MRS. JOSEFFY (*frightened*) How could I, the wife of Dr. Joseffy, be comfortable among people who are interested in you as a Christian? Think of the talk here and everywhere! If you go right away, there will be more talk. Yes, you should wait, over the holidays. You will be stronger.

SIDONIE. I shall go. But I can't be thinking of your perpetual worry about me. You haven't been living normally for years. My illness took a big part of your strength. Other women at your age look ten years younger than you do. Oh, I must make some repayment, and I can't do it by lying to you and telling you the proper thing would be for you to sit here with your hands folded! Happiness is your birthright! Why will you turn away from it?

MRS. JOSEFFY (*without spirit*) It is easy for you to say that.

SIDONIE (*unyielding*) It is easy for everyone to say that! Mother, because you are bewildered by life, you brood here. You doubt, you find fault. You are unable to shake out of your mind the wretched thoughts that haunt it. To understand what you are going through and not be able to help you is like becoming very ill when one is alone! You are made in the image of the perfect God, mother! Declare it!

MRS. JOSEFFY (*argumentative*) You think I'm weak because I look depressed. I have been stronger than you know. It's been no easy thing to find my way between the two of you, at times wanting to side with your father—for I am a Jewess! And then I would be afraid that you would lose what little strength you had gained, and (*reluctantly*) I would say over and over words I had seen in your "Science and Health." My difficulties were greater than either of you can guess. And I never dared to stop and think what it all meant and what I was doing.

SIDONIE. Then stop and think now, mother! If you come with me for a long stay, it will be not to take care of an invalid, but to attain for yourself the kingdom of heaven, which is peace. We will grow young together. You will be a girl again, and I can begin to live the girl's life of which I have been deprived.

MRS. JOSEFFY (*hungrily*) You are so sure, so hopeful! (*Then she shakes her head*). It's too late, dear. One can't readily make a becoming girl's hat out of an old woman's bonnet.

SIDONIE (*with her hands gripping her mother's shoulders, as if she would lift her out of her seat*) Despair!—is that to point the way for us from now on? Are you going to deny the demonstration I have made because

you wish to show loyalty to the synagogue, while in your heart you know why my suffering has vanished? Because you have been told so, you believe that at an appointed time you will step into the grave. There is wrinkle laid over wrinkle on your face. Your eyes are becoming sightless because they look on fear. Your uncertainty is decaying every nerve. The heavens call to you, and you are afraid to raise your head! You crouch and wait, like a doomed criminal! You, good mother, sentenced to a living death! Think of it! And you believe that a perfect all-loving God could be a party to such deliberate cruelty!

MRS. JOSEFFY (*stirred out of her apathy*) I can see how wonderful it must be for you. I have wondered, when I saw you lying on your back, looking so grey, why there should be so much unkindness in the world. But I considered that it was God's affair—it was between you and God, and I could do nothing.

SIDONIE. Blasphemous! Of what next are you going to accuse an all-wise Providence? You speak out of a material trance. (*Shaking her mother gently*) Wake up! Wake up! We are here for better reasons.

MRS. JOSEFFY (*tremulously*) It is hard not to be afraid when one is old. Age is worrying your father, too, or he would have acted differently. I am not obstinate, Sidonie. I tried to see what it was you were looking for when you turned to this religion. After you grew stronger this summer, I really began to believe that miracles were possible. I had thought that there had been a mistake about them in the past—

SIDONIE (*quickly*) There was no mistake. if you do not

look on them as tricks. God does not need to work tricks. You can have your miracle if you believe enough!

MRS. JOSEFFY. As you got better, I hadn't felt so stirred by religion in years. That was one reason why this summer seemed so short towards the end.

SIDONIE. It was like an immense, timeless panorama to me.

MRS. JOSEFFY (*grieving*) I didn't want you to come home—to this. You didn't see how upset I was, you were so busy with your own thoughts. Oh, I don't want to fall down now and give up, like a worn-out horse!

SIDONIE (*who has been hanging on every word*) You have more to tell me than that! Voice the truth, mother! It will set you free! I promise that!

MRS. JOSEFFY (*timorously*) You mustn't misunderstand. Sidonie. I love the God of Israel as deeply as your father does. I have been very loyal to all he stands for. But if this idea I have, that God will punish me for mistakes is going to be with me all the time, how can I go on? No! I should get away for a time. If I don't, I will lose hope!

SIDONIE. The perfect slave who is chained to fear never has hope.

MRS. JOSEFFY. But a woman never really feels free, dear! All my life I have had ambitions. I wanted to do a lot of things. But something always got in the way. After you became ill, there was only one thing I could live for. I couldn't hope to keep up with your father in his work, even though at first I did my best. It's not that I am stupid, Sidonie. There are times when I like

to think how fine it would be to settle down and understand what is going on about me. Not just out of curiosity. I want to share in the work, instead of crawling along behind.

SIDONIE (*wildly happy*) Mother, at last you are liberating yourself from the tyranny of purposeless living! Your hands and feet have been nailed to the cross of falsehood! God asks but to be remembered. Yes, you are going to come with me to Boston, to stay as long as your needs demand! Those needs can challenge the world! They can be boundless! No one shall tell you where they shall end!

MRS. JOSEFFY. I will be lying to your father if I go without speaking my thoughts to him.

SIDONIE. Since you will not speak, you will not have the courage to go, and if you stay, it will be a lie!

MRS. JOSEFFY. No, I dare not tell him that it is for myself I am going. If I do, what will become of him? (*Breathlessly*) I mustn't stay! I mustn't give in like that, living in a corner, afraid of what is coming next! I will do anything you say!

SIDONIE (*with hands uplifted*) Oh, the sublime demonstration! Mother, it was to you that the Prophet Ezekiel spoke when he declared: "I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord God; wherefore turn yourselves, and live ye!"

*(She seems to be addressing a wider audience than the lone woman who leans forward with fascination and eagerness; and her extended hands involuntarily assume the aspect of conveying a*

*blessing. Then she falls on her knees before her mother, and the two women cling to each other, overwhelmed by the unloosened floodtide of emotion).*

(CURTAIN)











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